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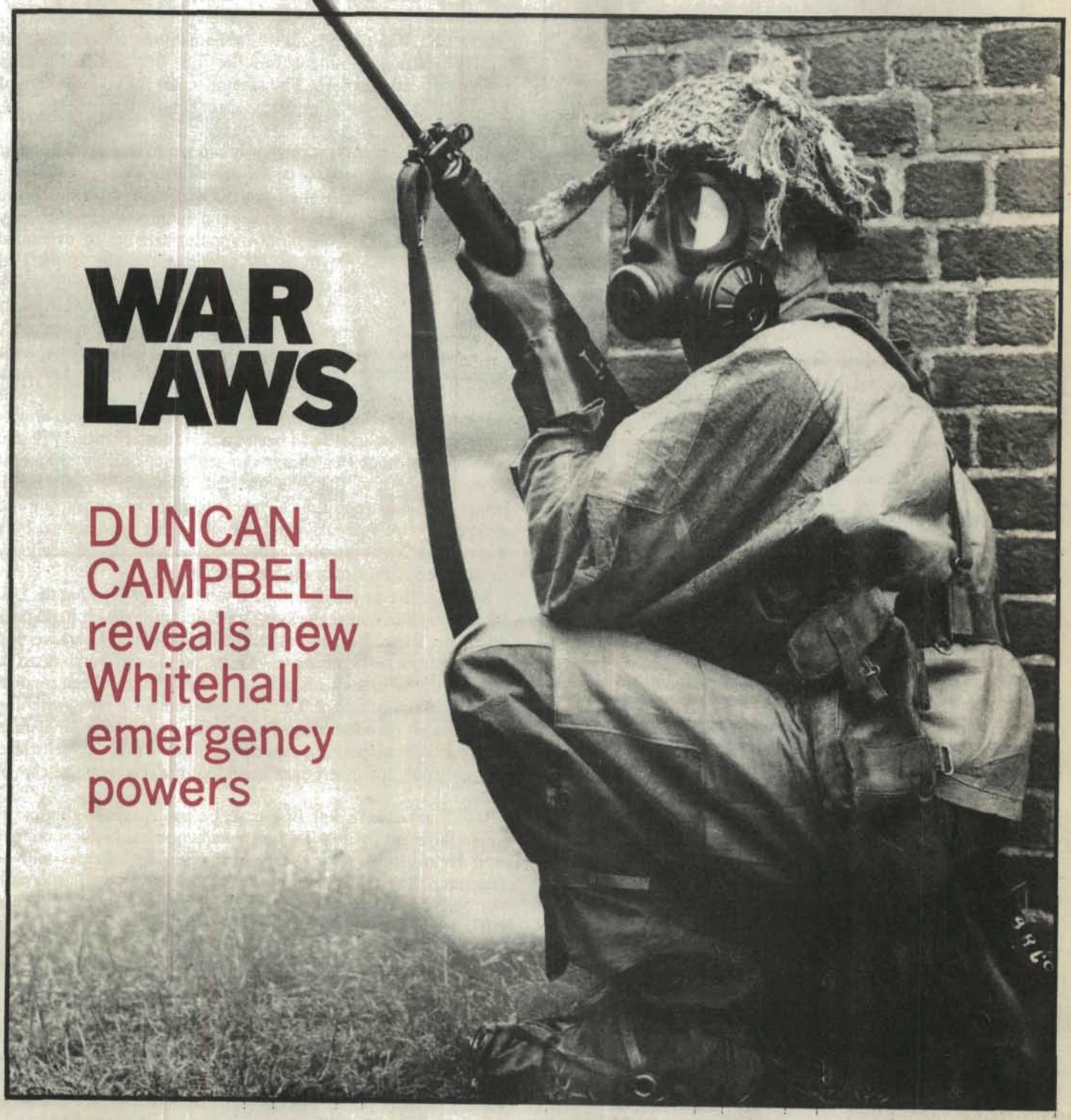
New Statesman

PETER KELLNER's TUC report



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DUNCAN CAMPBELL reveals new Whitehall emergency powers

SUZANNE CRONJE: Nigeria turns from tribes

PAUL FOOT: Fleet Street's scooper-poopers

JOHN EDGAR WIDEMAN: My brother's keeper

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New Statesman

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New Statesman

Vol 110 No 2842 6 September 1985

Demand is Thatcher's problem — not supply

TWO THINGS can be said with reasonable certainty about this week's bizarre government reshuffle. The first is that it will do nothing directly for jobs. The second is that the appointment of Lord Young as a full-blown Secretary of State will turn out to have been a mistake.

The two judgments are obviously connected and go to the heart of what is now supposed to be the government's strategy between now and the next general election. The telltale word that came through the Thatcher explanations and justifications on Monday was 'enterprise'. Lord Young's appointment to an expanded Department of Employment was to ensure that the ministry in future had 'much more to do with enterprise'. Leon Brittan's obvious demotion to the Department of Trade and Industry was not a demotion because 'it is the key enterprising department'. (The importance of the concept to the Prime Minister is indicated by the fact that in the second case she has felt the need to invent a new verb — 'to enterprise'.)

For Mrs Thatcher is floundering for some explanation of why her economic policies have been such a disaster since 1979 and some sign of hope that things can get better quickly. The first economic nostrum that she was fed, primarily by Sir Keith Joseph, while in opposition — take care of the money supply and everything else will take care of itself — has been shown by a disastrous six-year practical experiment with the British economy to have been simplistic nonsense.

So, Thatcherism asks itself, what went wrong? Why has the UK been losing jobs during the long recession, while the United States under her friend Reagan has gained 18 million? The answer is a new nostrum — enterprise. There are fewer barriers to it (whatever it is) in the United States and so jobs have been created. Ergo, announce that the Thatcher government is now switching its energies to the fostering of enterprise; appoint a businessman with virtually no political experience to run a ministry dedicated to enterprise; and assert once again that the rest will take care of itself.

It will not. There will, of course, be creative massaging of the unemployment figures. Technical and vocational education may well be expanded. Two-year youth training schemes will be expanded. Substantial numbers of school leavers will as a result not be classified as being on the dole, particularly if YTS is in effect made compulsory by the dole being withdrawn from those who refuse it.

None of this is in itself wrong. The general level of post-secondary education in the United Kingdom is woeful by international standards. If Mrs Thatcher's political need to reduce the headline unemployment figure is the occasion for a substantial injection of public resources into this sector, then the cloud has some kind of a silver lining. Even then, though, there should be more public discussion than there has been about the direction in which such a massive extension of tertiary education is going.

But none of this is going to create jobs. The incoherent economic 'theory' behind the new Thatcher economic policy is that if 'constraints' on the 'supply side' can be removed, lasting new employment will spontaneously be created.

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There is no convincing evidence for this theory — any more than there was for monetarism. But lack of evidence never troubled evangelical Thatcherism. Ever since 1979, in fact, the government *has* been trying to create what Mrs Thatcher, looking with hope to the United States, calls 'an enterprise culture'. Marginal tax rates on high salary earners were slashed. (The result has been an obscene salary explosion and not much else.) Capital taxes were slashed. The surcharge on investment income was abolished. Sir Geoffrey Howe produced 'enterprise budgets' and established 'enterprise zones'.

So far as anything can be measured, the impact on employment of all these tax concessions to the rich has been negligible. This is particularly true of the increasingly infamous Business Expansion Scheme, under which investment in new business can now be set against tax. In due course the Public Accounts Committee will no doubt produce a report roundly condemning the scheme for having been little more than a vehicle by which wealthy individuals have used money they would otherwise have been required to pay in tax to speculate in privately enriching ventures, mainly — until the last budget plugged a potentially scandalous loophole — in property.

Lord Young has evidently persuaded Mrs Thatcher that he has some trick for creating the effective enterprise culture of her dreams. It seems largely to be based on the idea that small firms are the way to success. In the industrial revolution, he argues, we had many small firms and were successful. Japan, it is argued, has many small firms (which ignores the fact that they constitute the *inefficient* sector of the Japanese economy).

Every government, Labour and Conservative, for 20 years has fallen for the argument that wells of enterprise and potential employment lie stifled in the small firms sector by taxation and oppressive government regulation — again, in the face of evidence that this is not true. Under the Young regime, with the Prime Minister's support, small firms will no doubt have their lot made still easier.

But as strategy for economic regeneration there is no evidence that this will be any more successful than in the past. The economic fact that Mrs Thatcher and Lord Young are unable or unwilling to grasp is that 18 million new jobs have been created in the United States not because of some enterprise culture but because the Reagan Administration has been boosting total demand in the American economy by running a massive deficit.

The conclusion is clear. Lord Young can fiddle as long as he likes on the edges of the British economy. There will, however, be no sustained recovery until the governments of the main industrial countries of Europe begin a steady and joint expansion of their economies. □

Secret legislation secretly arrived at

WE REVEAL on page 8 details of the draconian powers that the government plans to take over citizens and property alike in the event of heightening international tension. No less than three Emergency Powers Bills were drafted and approved between 1981 and 1983 by Cabinet committees chaired by the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary. These Bills would be bulldozed through Parliament at any moment that the military persuaded senior ministers that they were necessary.

Needless to say no ministerial statement has been made about the existence, let alone the content, of this draft legislation. It is of a piece with the deep and bad British tradition of introducing emergency legislation under pressure of a scare or crisis and rushing it through without proper, or indeed any, consideration of its implications. The 1911 Official Secrets Act, the 1914 immigration controls and the 1939 defence regulations are all very much cases in point.

All NATO countries, of course, have emergency plans for times of military tension or war. But other governments have made no secret of the framework of what is proposed by way of suspending normal civil and legal rights in time of crisis. For example, West Germany, the Netherlands and Norway have all published their emergency legislation and, in different contexts, debated it in Parliament and, where appropriate, put it openly on their existing statute books as contingency legislation.

British, and above all Whitehall's congenital addiction to secrecy have ensured that in this country things have been done differently. There can be no logical justification for this approach. If what is proposed in time of crisis is reasonable, to refuse to discuss it publicly implies that the British electorate is, unlike others in Europe, insufficiently mature to cope with the concepts and implications of the situation.

The other possible explanation is that the government is making contingency plans that it would find embarrassing to have to explain and defend in public. Indeed, since 1946 it has indeed been the case that, in the name of an increasingly hollow 'special relationship' with the United States, British governments have been prepared to make concessions, usually by way of informal and secret agreements between senior officials, to meet the requirements of American forces stationed in the United Kingdom.

These legal and administrative concessions, effectively detracting from British sovereignty, have gone far further here than anything negotiated by the Americans with other NATO countries. If that is what is essentially behind this latest exercise of government in camera, then there is all the more reason why the public should be told what has been going on. □

Your New Statesman — this autumn

Starting next week 13 September we shall be adding new features to give you a magazine that we hope will be even better value for money:

- an extra page of news at the front with a regular drawing by **Ralph Steadman**
- **John Minnion** will 'Take me to your Leader' each week, developing the series of political cartoons that he started on an occasional basis earlier in the year
- a new page at the end of the magazine will include a chess column by **George Botterill**, a FIDE international master and twice British champion
- also introducing a new strip cartoon by **Janis Goodman** and a weekly news quiz
- a new advertising feature, **Agenda**, for announcing your forthcoming events at a very economical rate

PLUS, of course, all the existing features of the *New Statesman* brought to you on better quality paper and in an improved wraparound cover.

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TUC MUFFLES UNION DISCORD OVER SEA-DUMPING OF NUCLEAR WASTE

THE TUC IS TRYING to prevent the main transport unions from reaffirming their opposition to the dumping of nuclear waste at sea. Senior TUC officials are putting pressure on the general secretaries of key unions not to make any public announcements on waste dumping policy without first gaining TUC clearance. ROB EDWARDS reports

THE FOUR main transport unions — the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU), the National Union of Railwaymen (NUR), the train drivers' union ASLEF and the National Union of Seamen (NUS) — were considering holding a press conference last Sunday (1 September) on the eve of the TUC annual conference in Blackpool to publicise their continuing opposition to any plans to dispose of radioactive waste at sea.

Getting wind of the plan, TUC general secretary Norman Willis wrote to all the transport unions insisting that they 'refrain from making any collective statements which would have the effect of changing existing policy'. He said it was essential for all unions to acknowledge that 'the only appropriate procedure' was initially to submit proposals for policy development through the TUC's committee machinery.

This intervention is said to have angered the unions involved and was described by one key union activist as 'a crude attempt to gag unions on the nuclear waste issue'. NUS general secretary Jim Slater replied by strongly asserting his union's right to make any public statements it wishes on the subject 'either individually or in concert with other unions'. He was 'astounded' by the suggestion that any union policy pronouncements should first be referred to the TUC. 'I can think of no other area of TUC policy where this principle applies,' he said .

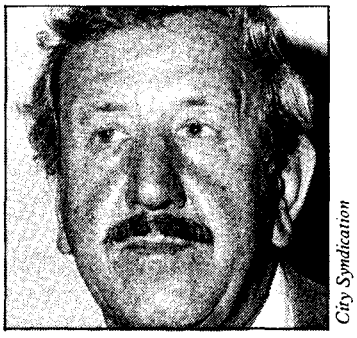
Unwilling postponement

However the transport unions did decide to postpone Sunday's press conference in the belief that it would go unnoticed amidst all the furor about the possible suspension of the Amalgamated Union of Engineering Workers (AUEW).

The new plan is to make a joint union statement in the week before this year's crucial meeting of the London Dumping Convention, the 58-nation organisation set up by the United Nations to control the dumping of waste at sea.

But TUC chiefs are still hoping to talk some of the union leaders involved out of the idea. They believe that any statement which pre-empted the completion of the current joint TUC-government review of nuclear waste dumping policy would be 'very damaging'. They're anxious to maintain a semblance of unity between the anti-dumping transport unions and the pro-nuclear engineering and electrical unions (EEPTU, AUEW and EMA),

Earlier this year the Holliday Committee established by the government and the TUC recommended that the current moratorium on dumping should be maintained until more research has been done. In response, the govenment launched a study to find the 'best practicable environmental option' for waste disposal.



City Syndication

Neptune's lieutenant — Jim Slater

Autumn briefing

The TUC is planning a 'briefing meeting' for interested unions on the results of this study in the early autumn. Cynics in the environmental movement regard the whole process as nothing more than a series of manoeuvres by the Government and the TUC hierarchy aimed at engineering the resumption of sea-dumping.

In June the TUC appointee to the Holliday Committee, researcher Peter Taylor, resigned from the Committee and withdrew from the new study. He accused the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAFF) of being determined to resume sea-dumping regardlss of the results of the scientific research. MAFF's attitude, he said, 'severely compromises' the good work being carried out by the Department of the Environment.

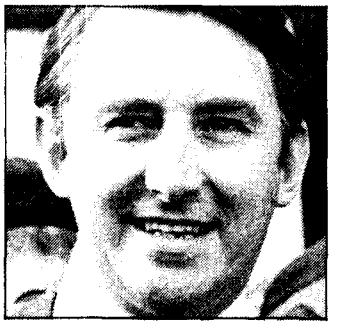
The London Dumping Convention is due to review its two-year ban on sea-dumping at its meeting in the city between 23-27 September. Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth will be attempting to win the two-thirds majority necessary for a binding amendment which would permanently ban the dumping of any radioactive substances.

Failing that, they're optimistic that a majority of nations will vote to continue the moratorium in spite of fierce opposition from the British, Japanese and American governments. ●

Jill Posener

ON A HOARDING in London. And lesbians — and gay men — vote too, and even serve in constituencies. Having deliberately blurred manifesto commitments last time round, and 'forgotten' the lives of homosexuals in all manifesto lists of society's harassed groups, Labour will be tackled at Conference (Bournemouth 30 September-4 October) by 14 constituency resolutions or amendments on the topic. And 54 CLPs and 45 individual MPs and MEPs have signed a Labour Campaign for Lesbian & Gay Rights 'Call for a Debate'. Good heavens, can there be a plenary appearance beyond the fringe?

Andrew Lumsden



Owen's plasticine? — David Steel

Lib grassroots in stew over N. Ireland policy

TENSIONS are rising in the Liberal Party prior to Dundee assembly (opens 14 September) over activist fears that leader David Steel is soft-pedalling on the party commitment to a united Ireland in order to placate the SDP wing of the Alliance.

The focus is a recently-published document, *What Future for Northern Ireland?*, regarded as pro-Unionist and produced by the Alliance's commission on Ulster, which was set up in 1983 after that year's Harrogate assembly had defied the party leadership and voted for unification of Ireland — the first British political party to do so for 60 years.

Party workers who pressed for the Harrogate 'united Ireland' motion criticised the commission, alleging it was 'packed' to reach a preconceived conclusion and that only one member of it was sympathetic to the nationalist position. The Liberal 'mini-parliament', the party council, has repudiated both the commission and its document.

What Future for Northern Ireland recommends a return to the internal power-sharing executive for Northern Ireland of the 1970s, and increased security measures against the IRA with the long-term prospect of the Irish Republic rejoining the Commonwealth. 'It's an attempt', says Ian Brodie Brown, a Stockport Liberal councillor and member of the Liberal Party's governing council, the Standing Committee, 'to put the party back on lines Steel wanted, as opposed to genuine discussion about where we go from here'.

What Future has been put on the Dundee assembly agenda with accusations of its having been 'bounced onto the agenda' by Clement Freud (MP for Northeast Cambridgeshire), Standing Committee chair. 'Not only will delegates have no opportunity to do justice to such a lengthy document', says Harrow Liberal councillor Mike Hamill, 'but moral blackmail will be applied — if you vote against it, you're voting against the Alliance'.

Kevin Toolis

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Jenkin exits with a last blow to GLC grant efforts

IN ONE of his last acts at the Department of the Environment, Patrick Jenkin, in his role as scrutiniser of GLC grants, seems to have decided that projects 'of purely local significance' shouldn't get ratepayers' money — despite the fact that section 137 of the 1972 Local Government Act, under which such grants are made, allows grants which are 'in the interests of London *or any part of it*.' At the same time, many groups seem set to lose money after abolition because they aren't local *enough*.

In a decision which the DoE press office says isn't to be considered a precedent, 'though you can take that with as much salt as you like,' Jenkin three weeks ago deemed 'not expedient' an approved GLC grant to the Hammersmith Community Trust. The Trust wanted £10,330 to draw up alternative plans for the Hammersmith Broadway Island site — a major traffic interchange being developed by London Regional Transport which will have important regional implications for London's transport system.

The reason supplied for the refusal looks particularly ludicrous, and if taken as a precedent could have wide-ranging implications. Most organisations can only, in the nature of things, be located in one place, but may be used by or affect people from all over London and beyond, meaning they are far from confined to 'purely local significance'.

. . . into the fire

The post-GLC-abolition picture for creative and/or pressure organisations looks no more hopeful. London's Tory boroughs, which are in a majority, seem about to adopt rules for the funding of London-wide groups which will effectively cut off funds to campaigning organisations that aren't 'purely' for Londoners or which oppose the Tory party.

The London Borough Grants Unit, an ad hoc committee of non-Labour boroughs, commissioned a report from management consultants Hay-MSL — a subsidiary of Saatchi and Saatchi — to suggest criteria which groups applying to the boroughs would have to meet.

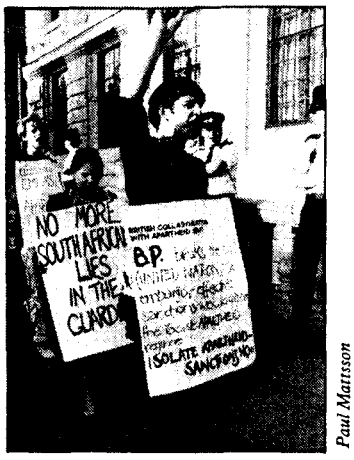
Under the Hay-MSL's rules, published 9 July, grant-aided organisations mustn't engage in any party political activity, or have the prime aim of seeking to change any of the policies of central government. And national organisations will only be elegible if they separately identify and specifically provide a service for a significant number of people in London.

These rules, which reflect the ideological priorities of the Tory boroughs rather than any legal requirements, haven't yet been officially adopted — because the final grant giving-body isn't yet legally constituted — but there's little doubt that they will be, at a meeting towards the end of this month.

Many groups seem likely to lose money and others will be forced to modify their activities. The Hay-MSL report specifically mentions as groups 'which might be affected', *Spare Rib*, (which will also be losing lucrative GLC advertising,) GMP (Gay Men's Press) and the National Committee on Racism in Children's Books (NCRCB).

Some groups of this kind, eg NCRCB, although they're not for Londoners alone, derive most of their support from London, and claim they are most logically located there.

Jolyon Jenkins



Paul Mattsson

EVERY PLACARD tells a story. City AA shaming South Africa House on 30 August, as on every Friday. The *Guardian* reference (half-hidden) is believed to be to Pretoria paid advertising carried in many papers.

Terry O'Halloran

Geese lose to distillers in Islay battle

CONSERVATIONISTS have now lost the battle of Duich Moss on the Scottish island of Islay (NS 23 August). A series of meetings last week between the Nature Conservancy Council and Scottish Malt Distillers resulted in an agreement which permits the peat bog to be cut for the making of whisky, thereby threatening the rare white-fronted geese who winter there. Friends of the Earth (Scotland) has condemned the agreement as a 'sell-out' and called for the resignation of the NCC's depute director in Scotland, Jim McCarthy.

Rob Edwards

MISCELLANY

Lead kindly Luce

The new Minister for the Arts is artful, we can say that much. As junior min for the Foreign Office Richard Luce was busy in Geneva last week presenting Britain's 'case' for continued possession of nuclear weapons at the review conference of the Non Proliferation Treaty. He was justifying the eight-fold increase in warheads the UK's due to get with replacement of Polaris by Trident, seeking to show that's compatible with the NPT article VI mandate to negotiate in good faith to achieve nuclear disarmament. Lovely wheeze he came up with. When the UK signed the NPT in 1968, he argued, Brit nuclear weapons were about 7 per cent of the world total. Now they're 3 per cent. So Trident merely restores a status quo, or even qualifies as a disarmament. Luce is going to be very good at explaining why a cut in any arts area funding is a substantial increase. An invaluable appointment.

Let 100 flowers wilt

Sources close to Westminster — well actually the city council — confirm that in the state of emergency prevailing under Lady Shirley (Tesco) Porter vital economic installations are being closed down. The council is considering closing its Plant Propagation Centre, a centre of excellence that even Mrs Thaatchi would be proud of, that enabled Westminster to win the coveted City Trophy in the London in Bloom competition two years running.

Flucky draw

Now that the *Observer* has stopped terrifying its readers with its back-page *Grand Tour Quiz* we thought we'd nip in and offer Miscellany readers a much more intelligent game with sillier prizes. Next Thursday at 8.30 pm BBC 2 launches a six-part sitcom called *The New Statesman*. The nerve. And to think we were around when even MI5 hadn't been invented, let alone Broadcasting House. There was a pilot last 17 December. Windsor Davies (*It Ain't Half Hot Mum*') will play a character who inherits a title from a long-forgotten uncle. Inflated with importance, he comes a cropper trying to bully everyone. Ghastly — though it's rumoured that M--- T---, viewing the pilot, took it personally, and that it's the reason she's trying to tow Alasdair Milne out into the Atlantic and sink him over the *Titanic*. Anyway, for a free gift of Fluck and Law squeaky toys derived from *Spitting Image*, which fit into the hand and can be crushed, so that the frightful visages of top politicians collapse and reflate screaming, and which we'll distribute to the best entries by end-September, anyone like to imagine 100 word max plot-lines and suggest comic leads for other upcoming BBC 2 sitcoms named after celebrated organs? *The Salisbury Review*, say. Or *The Lady*. Or *The Tatler*. Or *The BBC*. ... anything else of the sort you like. Len Deighton's spy sitcom *The Listener* is especially looked forward to, starring, of course, Sir Alec Guinness. As also *The Spectator* the misadventures of Leo McKern as a Soho peep-show proprietor. Go on... help the Beeb.

Aren't we sweethearts?

At last it can be told. We'd have told it last week, but we didn't have space, concentrating as we were on the Beeb's obliviousness to carnivals. While David Hirst, the Guardian's *man in Beirut, has been dodging the shells and bullets, here in London the* NS *has been covering his back for him. On Wednesday 21 August the* Graun *printed a dispatch of Hirst's headlined 'Israel blamed as car bombs engulf Beirut in violence'. It fairly described how Israel had been blamed by Lebanese politicians — including President Gemayel — for the recent spate of car bombings. Next day, a* Graun *leader called the Lebanese accusations against Israel 'totally unsubstantiated'. This didn't stop a group of young Zionists picketing the paper's offices on Thursday 22 August, handing out leaflets that concluded: 'Hirst is obviously incompetent — when will he be removed?' We gave the picket organisers a ring. Isn't it, we enquired, part of a foreign correspondent's job to report the statements of a country's politicians? Well, yes, they said — it's the headline we really object to. Reporters don't write headlines, we said. We know, they replied. In that case, we asked, do you withdraw your call for Hirst's sacking? Muffled silence as the mouthpiece was inadequately gagged. At last: 'yes'. Phew!*

As you predicted . . .

By the way, pats on the back, *NS* readers, for the last time you briefly spread your wings out of the Comp into these page 5 pastures. When Ana Gram was in full spate between October 1984-March 1985 you showed psi-power in predicting this week's Shuffle. Leon Brittan, in your scrabbling hands, became 'an inert blot' (11 January), Lord Gowrie 'I grow older' (22 February). Thatcher has dished herself by ignoring your Nigel Lawson of 4 January, 'We all sign on' — famous! Unfortunately Ana never set you the task of Douglas Hurd. But then the less said of Hurd the better.

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INDIA PLAYS CAT AND MOUSE WITH PASSPORT

KHALID SABIR, an Indian journalist and politician, has been stranded in London for the last eight months, after his passport was impounded by the Indian High Commission in December last year. ANWAR IQBAL reports

OFFERED a one way ticket to India, he refused as he wants to return 'only as a full citizen, and not as one whose nationality is pending'. Offered political asylum in Britain, he declined. The Home Office has allowed him to stay until his case is decided.

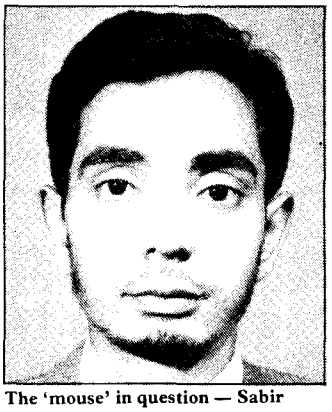
The Indian High Commission, contacted by the *NS*, confirms the impounding of the passport and says: 'The action has been taken because his activities are detrimental to the security and integrity of India'. Mr Desai, a second secretary at the High Commission, refuses to make any further comment as 'the matter is being considered by the Indian Ministry of External Affairs'.

Fought election

During the last Indian elections Sabir was a candidate for a provincial assembly seat in his home state of UP (Utter Pradesh) on a ticket of the UP Muslim Majlis, one of the political allies of the Janata (People's) Party which defeated Mrs Gandhi in the 1977 elections.

His passport was impounded before, in 1975, when Mrs Gandhi imposed emergency rule over India, and was only returned when the Janata Party came to power in 1977. He came to London in December, where he publishes a newsletter, *Muslim India*, and is also secretary general of the World Muslim Minority Commission, which claims branches in more than 100 countries.

His passport was impounded on this occasion after he took it in to the Indian High Commission asking that, since it was full to the last page, and he wished to visit the USA, could additional pages be added? When he went back for it, he was refused possession.



The 'mouse' in question — Sabir

He was shown, he says, a telex from the Ministry of External Affairs, Delhi, asking the High Commission to impound the passport. The telex was dated 22 November 1984 — when he was still in India. However, instead of impounding the passport while he was in his own country, the authorities apparently waited till he arrived in London.

Bureau-nightmare

He was asked to contact the Ministry of External Affairs, Delhi, which he did, and submitted an appeal through his lawyers on 13 January this year. After repeated requests for an answer, he received a reply in April asking him to appear before the authorities in Delhi on 10 April.

Allotted, on request, a second date in July, his attorney appeared before the authorities only to be told that Mr Sabir had addressed his appeal to the wrong authority, and should send a fresh appeal, now addressed to the Chief Passport Officer, Delhi.

A fresh appeal sent by Sabir on 31 July hasn't yet received a reply. A number of prominent Indian citizens, members of parliament and politicians including Charan Singh, president of the Lok Dal party, B. N. Pande, governor Orissa province, Satya Prakash Malaviya, Asad Madani, a member of the Indian upper house, and George Fernandes, a former minister in the Janata government, have appealed to the government to release Sabir's passport but so far nothing has been done.

People's Union for Civil Liberties, founded by the renowned Indian politician Jayaprakash Naryan, has taken up his case and appealed to the Government to 'do justice'. ●

Viraj Mendis case

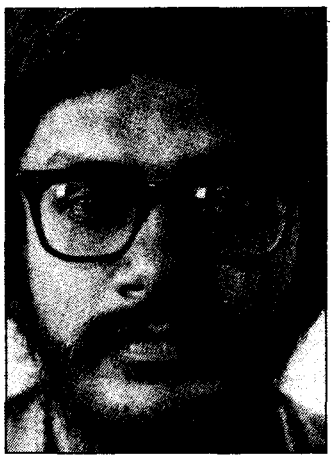
POLICE DROP CHARGES, BUT HOME OFFICE SAYS GET OUT IN ANY CASE

THE HOME OFFICE has now issued a deportation order (dated 21 August) against Sri Lankan born Viraj Mendis, eighteen months after police seized his passport (*NS* 21 September 1984) and just two days after police *dropped* breach-of-the-peace charges against him. He believes he faces 'certain persecution' if made to go back to Sri Lanka.

29 year-old Mendis, who lives in Manchester and came to Britain in 1973, publicly opposes the Sri Lanka regime and supports Tamil independence, though himself Singhalese. He has taken part in anti-racist and anti-deportation campaigns, though now himself the centre of one (*Viraj Mendis Defence Campaign*, Box 38, 434 Corn Exchange Buildings, Hanging Ditch, Manchester M3 4BN. Phone 061 273 5947).

Booked, so to speak

The breach-of-the-peace charge, now dropped, arose from an incident on 8 August. His own account is that while walking down Oxford Road in Manchester on the way to the central library he was stopped by a police constable. Asked his name, he refused to give it. After some further conversation, he was arrested.



Paul Mattsson

AGED SEVENTEEN when he came to the UK, Mendis was a student but after two years, under financial pressure, took a job as a labourer in 1975. It meant he couldn't renew his student visa. His passport was impounded by police in May 1984 following 'random checks' by the DHSS which breached the Department's own guidelines.

When a police van arrived the arresting officer told a police sergeant that Mendis had called him a 'racist pig', and was being arrested for conduct likely to cause a breach of the peace. Mendis denies saying anything of the sort.

Strip-search

He says he was manhandled inside the van and, at Bootle St police station, stripped and given an intimate body search. He was held for five hours. On release, charged with breach-of-the-peace, he was handed a form stating he could be deported if convicted.

Local protests quickly built up. Both the city council and Manchester police committee condemned the arrest and demanded an explanation from police. City council chair Ken Strath joined a protest march through the city centre. Viraj Mendis told the *NS* in August 'we were all waiting to see how going to the library in the middle of the day could provoke a breach of the peace'.

The wait was in vain. On Monday 19 August on arrival at court, Mendis was informed that the police had withdrawn the charge. 'How can they arrest me for walking down the street, strip me, hold me for five hours, threaten me with deportation and then drop the whole case without any explanation or apology?' Mendis asks.

Immediately after the episode, he heard that Bob Litherland MP (*Manchester Central*) has had a letter from David Waddington, responsible for immigration matters, rejecting pleas on behalf of Mendis. The deportation order will be appealed.

Terry O'Halloran

Mystery fire at legendary restaurant

A LONDON RESTAURANT which acquired legendary fame in Pakistan in the 1960s as the one where an ousted Pakistani president used to sit at the counter, has once again made it to the front pages of Pakistani newspapers here and in the Sub-continent. This time thanks to an arson attack which many believe was racially motivated.

The Tandoor Mahal, of Warren Street, was set on fire on 29 August while five people were sleeping inside. No lives were lost, but the stairs and front of the building were burnt. Police say somebody poured petrol through the letter box and lighted it.

The late General Iskander Mirza, first military ruler of Pakistan, ousted in 1958 by General Ayub Khan, was one of the shareholders in the Tandoor Mahal, where important VIP functions are still held. Since 1958 the military has remained in power, except for a brief interval when Bhutto became the Prime Minister.

However, 'why blame racists, why not a frustrated democrat? After all, this is how people express their frustration against dictators in that country', said a Pakistani political refugee when informed of the arson attack.

Mohsin A. Bangash

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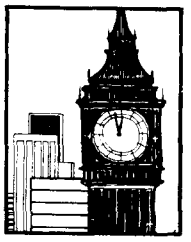

PETER KELLNER

Those who live by The Fudge shall die by The Fudge

Blackpool

THE REAL TROUBLE about the bloodletting over government money for the engineers and electricians was that the decision, ultimately, could not be fudged. At the end of the day, the two unions either continued to accept money for ballots, or they stopped: and if they did insist on having the money, either the TUC caved in or it had to kick the two unions out.

'Ultimately'. . . 'at the end of the day': we shall return to The Postponement, the lazy cousin of The Fudge, a little later in this column. But let us first honour The Fudge.

On any matter that does not affect the basic policies of individual unions, the Trades Union Congress can be as uncompromising as it wishes. If the new Trade and Industry Secretary, Leon Brittan, refuses to introduce import controls as the TUC wants, there is no sanction that the TUC can bring to bear against him. If Lord Young tells the unions to get lost on their employment policies, too bad.

When, however, TUC decisions require actions from the unions themselves, a problem arises. Unions are supposed to conform to — or at least not actively undermine — TUC policy. The penalties for contravention are clear and draconian. The TUC's Rule 13 spells out what can happen to a union that violates 'the declared principles or declared policy of the congress.' If the offending union fails to come to heel the General Council 'are hereby empowered in their discretion to order that the organisation be forthwith suspended from membership of the Congress until the next Annual Congress.'

In practice, such nastiness is almost invariably avoided by a fudge — a form of words in Congress Resolutions that is so elastic as to make it impossible to harass unwilling unions into line. That was how last year's TUC avoided outright civil war over the miners' strike. Other unions were beseeched to take action in support of the miners, but the final resolution was so feeble that it could be, and was, largely ignored.

Such a way of transacting business does nothing either for intellectual rigour or for militant solidarity. But it does have one big advantage. It keeps the show on the road. Empty claims about labour movement unity allow the troops to remain members of the same army, able to fight another day. The vital function of The Fudge, then, is not so much to help win current battles as to keep the movement's powder dry for future ones. Without its carefully crafted ambiguities and delicately chosen weasel words, the TUC would have fallen apart long ago.

One such fudge this week at Blackpool concerns an issue that could still be causing headaches when the row about government money has been long forgotten. Some unions have started doing single-union deals with employers, excluding other unions from negotiating rights. APEX, the clerical workers' union, put forward a resolution that required unions not to do such deals with companies 'where other unions would be deprived of their existing rights, except by prior agreement of the other unions concerned.'

The reason why APEX put forward this resolution was that it had been squeezed out of an electronics factory in South Wales when the Japanese company bought the plant from GEC. The electricians made a single-union deal with the new owners, and APEX's appeal to the TUC disputes panel got nowhere. So APEX came to Blackpool wanting the TUC to change its policy covering such events.

What the APEX resolution did not propose was anything to stop unions coming to single-union agreements at 'Greenfield' sites, where wholly new factories were set up and hence no existing unions to be squeezed out. So the National Graphical Association put forward what might be termed its 'Eddy Shah' amendment. It wanted the TUC to change its rules to make sure that any future single-union deal 'must take fully into account and not contravene existing industry practices and agreements.' In other words, the electricians should not be allowed to recruit printers to work for Eddy Shah, simply because his will be a new paper.

When we came to the debate on Monday, the NGA's amendment had been absorbed into APEX's resolution and the three crucial words 'and not contravene' were missing. So the resolution passed by Congress left the General Council with no clear instruction as to how to deal with single-union deals with employers like Eddy Shah. A classic victory for the politics of fudge.

IF THE OUTCOME of the 'single-union' debate left us with a fudge on a matter of genuine principle, the row over government money represented the exact opposite. From the way some delegates have been speaking, you might think the TUC had never touched a government penny in its life. In fact it receives considerable sums for training schools. And should a delegate, in a rare idle moment, turned to paragraph 291 of the General Council's annual report, he (and overwhelmingly it is 'he') will find the following statement: 'In June the General Council... asked the government for an additional £30,000 for training benefitting independent South African trade union organisations.'

So the idea that high principles or the preservation of past purity are involved is so much eyewash. The issue is not about money but about the sanctity of past TUC decisions, however dotty and however out-dated. The engineers' and electricians' argument for ignoring TUC policy is essentially that the policy was adopted in 1982 in the hope that a Labour government would be elected within two years. Gavin Laird and Eric Hammond say that the re-election of the Tories in 1983 meant that the 1982 strategy had failed and had to be rethought.

Nonsense, said the Left: a policy is a policy and must be adhered to until Congress decides otherwise — unless it's broken by the miners. They justified breaching the TUC's rules on limited, peaceful picketing by saying that the guidelines were laid down in 1979, before Mrs Thatcher was elected to Downing Street. Since the Tories have now won two elections in a row the miners insist that by the time last year's strike began, the guidelines were out-of-date and could be ignored.

A logical observer might think that what is sauce for the goose is sauce for the ostrich: but logic has been a commodity in short supply at Blackpool this week. Which brings us back to the point about postponements and fudges.

As it began to dawn on general secretaries that no fudge was available, some began to turn their minds to thoughts of postponement. If only a decision could be delayed until after this week's Congress, tempers would have time to cool, negotiations conducted at a leisurely pace and a final confrontation with the engineers and electricians either avoided or delayed.

But for this particular trick to be pulled off, The Chief Fudgemaster— a.k.a. the TUC's General Secretary — would have to use all his skill, authority and powers of persuasion. Len Murray could have done it. Norman Willis comes across instead like a parrot on mogadon. He is a good and brave man, operating in a situation where those two noble qualities count for little. The TUC only works when the centre holds — and when the centre consists of Willis it takes a strong trade unionist not to weep.

On Monday Eric Hammond, the electricians' leader, quoted what he claimed was a Chinese proverb (for all I know he made it up on the spur of the moment): 'It takes a clever man to get you out of a mess that a wise man would never have got you into.' After many years in which wisdom at the TUC has consisted of devising compromises, and cleverness in getting them through Congress, the union movement has this week witnessed its old colleague The Fudge having a massive heart attack. What the TUC's friends do not know is whether the patient will recover — or, indeed, whether it should. □

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Official Army photograph

War games at the bottom of the garden; soldiers rehearse moving through the long grass in Exercise Brave Defender

SECRET LAWS FOR WARTIME BRITAIN

Draconian new laws are being secretly put to the test in this week's major Army exercise, 'Brave Defender'. The new laws will sacrifice civil rights to British and American military plans, reports DUNCAN CAMPBELL. Research by Patrick Forbes

DRASTIC NEW EMERGENCY war laws have been approved by the Cabinet, to be put into action in a crisis. The new laws — contained in three secret Emergency Powers Bills, now held in every government ministry — would give special powers to government, police and military very early in an international crisis.

The legislation introduces a system of Ground Defence Areas, which extend the defence lines of hundreds of military bases and important industrial sites far beyond their peacetime perimeters. Within a GDA the military would be able to move residents and commandeer their houses or property — demolishing or adapting houses to create free firing zones or gun emplacements as required. The total GDA system covers 'half the country', according to one official source.

Details of the GDA system emerged after a Cambridgeshire woman, who lives close to a major US Air Force base, tried to find out whether in war her home would be commandeered by US troops. For six months, Mrs Christine Saltmarshe, of Alconbury Weston, got no reply from the Defence Ministry. She then suffered a bizarre series of incidents, including her house being 'buzzed' by a helicopter. A Home Office minister, Lord Glenarthur, has now admitted — after questioning by the Labour peer Lord Hatch about the progress of her enquiries — that every US and British military base has made its own GDA plan.

A Ground Defence Area is the 'area associated with the tactical plan for defending a base and each vital installation has an individual GDA tailored to its needs and the local geography', wrote Parliamentary Undersecretary Lord Glenarthur in June, 'I hope this sets Mrs Saltmarshe's mind at rest'. It didn't.

This week a major army exercise, Brave Defender — the largest military exercise to be held in Britain since the Second World War — will be testing the new GDA system. The exercise has been portrayed as a response to the threat of infiltrating Soviet 'special forces', or 'Spetsnaz' troops. Soviet observers were invited to attend the exercise, under the terms of the Helsinki accords, but chose not to come.

Mrs Saltmarshe's initiative was reinforced this week by CND chair Joan Ruddock, whose Berkshire home lies close to another key point, the British nuclear weapons factory at Burghfield. Ms Ruddock is visiting Burghfield on Friday to ask for details of how she and her neighbours would fare under such crisis conditions.

CND will be following this up with a national campaign for more public information about the secret GDA system. 'People living next to military bases already have to put up with so much', Joan Ruddock said, 'they have a right to know what these military GDA plans will mean for them in a crisis. It's clear that we shall lose our civil rights very early — and with them, our right to say no to war'. NCCL's General Secretary Sarah Spencer said that the plans indicated 'a disdain for democracy.'

SINCE 1979, British 'Home Defence' tactics have been completely revised on Cabinet instructions. These cover plans to defend hundreds of vital military and economic installations, each of them a so-called key point. Additional military priorities have been created following the signature in 1983 of a secret agreement with the United States, the Joint Logistic Plan. This plan promises to hand over British military and civil resources to the United States.

Until Mrs Saltmarshe's campaign, the government had regarded all aspects of Key Point protection plans as classified. The 1985 Defence White Paper said only that 'our aim is to have a complete set of plans for the defence of

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Andy Kaye

Bulldozers were used to dig surface-to-air missile battery emplacements among fields and houses up to a mile from Upper Heyford US Air Force base, during an unpublicised Home defence exercise held in April this year.

vital installations in the United Kingdom, both military and civil'.

The new plans for Ground Defence Areas and for meeting US logistic requirements have been deemed to require special emergency legal powers if they are to work effectively. This new emergency legislation was drafted before 1983. A small, secret team inside the Home Office is now putting the final touches to the dozens of special war regulations that will also be needed.

We have obtained details of these new war laws from several senior officials who have been concerned with top-level defence planning. These sources, separately, describe the war laws as 'terrifying', 'draconian', and 'sweeping . . . far beyond anything that was proposed before'. The three new Emergency Powers Bills have already been printed. Their terms go far beyond previous emergency Acts or the provisions of the Defence Regulations made in the Second World War.

The Emergency Powers (No1) Bill gives powers to designate any suitable part of the country as a GDA. In these areas, military commanders have complete rights to have people and property moved, in accordance with their plans.

The second phase of Emergency Powers extends the special laws to cover the whole of Britain. A primary objective is to guard American and British 'Lines of Communication'. The third Emergency Powers Bill gives government ministers total 'life and death' powers — which can be exercised as arbitrarily as they may think circumstances require. Ministers have deliberately misled Parliament about the fact these Emergency Powers Bills already exist.

MONDAY THIS WEEK saw the start of the 'mobilisation' phase of Exercise Brave Defender. Since then, 65,000 regular and reserve troops have been reporting to military bases, ready to be posted to Key Points throughout Britain.

Were the scenario in Brave Defender for real, even though not a shot had yet been fired, fears that the worsening east-west conflict might lead to war would have led the government to start guarding key bases. Parliament would have been asked to pass the first phase of Emergency Powers. Despite the sweeping powers contained in the Bill, present government plans require that it be passed within 24 hours at most.

Although those planning Brave Defender initially wanted to exercise as though full emergency powers had been granted, they were firmly turned down. Road blocks and armed military patrols in public places *will* be set up — but under strict civil police supervision.

Before Brave Defender could go ahead, the Defence Ministry had to negotiate with every Chief Constable in the country about how and where they would be allowed to exercise. One police force, Durham, turned them down. Others, such as Kent, warned the Army that they could not allow their war games to interfere with the public or disrupt ordinary traffic movement in key centres such as the Dover docks.

Colonel Bill Norman, spokesman for the Army Eastern District Command, told the *New Statesman* last week that 'our soldiers who are guarding key points do so under the authority of the Chief Constable. The police are there to make sure what we do is within the law. We've not been given special powers in this exercise'.

But, were Brave Defender for real, what follows would now be the position:

> **Emergency Powers (No1) Bill:** Defence zones around key points are declared to be Ground Defence Areas (GDAs) by the Secretary of State for Defence. Within GDAs, everyone and everything is subject to military plans. Residents may be expelled or forced to move according to US or British defence requirements. Road blocks and checkpoints can be set up under military control. Canals, seaways, roads and tracks can be closed. Houses will be demolished to give free-fire zones. 'Subversive' protestors or others within GDA areas can be detained without charge or trial on order from the Home Secretary. Demonstrations can be controlled under public order rules.

The first Emergency Powers Bill, it was decided, should not legally censor press and broadcasting media. But official 'guidance' would be provided by a special organisation based on the Prime Minister's office.

The next step in Brave Defender's scenario is British and NATO mobilisation. British reserve forces are called out by Royal Proclamation — called Queens Order No 2. As British troops leave for Europe, massive US forces start arriving on the east coast by air and sea. Following mobilisation, Parliament would be recalled within five days, if not sitting already, to pass the second phase of Emergency Powers.

> **Emergency Powers (No 2) Bill:** Powers inside the Ground Defence Areas are extended to cover the entire country. The assets of all private haulage and transport undertakings can be requisitioned. Petrol stations will be 'frozen' and supplies released according to a Priority Allocation' System. Food and agricultural stockpiles, petrol and oil supplies, and other goods are requisitioned for government use. The Home Secretary's Detention (internment) orders are automatically extended. Strikes in major industries are outlawed. British Rail is taken over. Press and broadcasting organisations become subject to ministerial direction.

At the same time as the No 2 Act becomes law, the government would also take over all British shipping (using the Royal Prerogative) and all aircraft (using powers in the Civil Aviation Act).

The third Emergency Powers Bill has been drafted for the moment when nuclear attack on Britain is thought to be imminent. Despite pious references to the supremacy of Parliament in official documents, officials do not really expect that this Bill would go before Parliament in a pre-war crisis. This Bill would probably be made law by Order in Council. One government defence planner explained: 'It can all be done by proclamation. No one knows what might be happening at that time. Whoever has the guns (i.e. the military authorities) could take over . . .'

Under the third Act, the government would take full powers to rule by decree. All elected and consultative organisations would be disbanded or stripped of their powers. If a nuclear strike destroyed the organisations of central government, these life-and-death powers are delegated to junior ministers.

> **Emergency Powers (No 3) Bill:** Central government takes total powers, including the authority to modify the judicial system. All laws may be enforced by *ad hoc* courts, and summary penalties (including death) imposed without right of appeal. All public and private undertakings are subject to government direction. Any goods may be requisitioned. Adults and children alike can be directed to work in labour gangs (including military or police duties if required). The Home Secretary or Regional Commissioners can make permanent internment orders against political subversives; and at the same time order the release of ordinary prisoners. Health regulations permit the detention in 'rest centres' of suspected disease carriers. The currency system can be modified. Non-government bodies exercising statutory powers, like the BMA and the Law Society, are wound up in favour of central government. Some of these powers may be delegated to local authority 'controllers' — peacetime Chief Executives. Full powers can be exercised by eleven junior ministers who are appointed, by Royal Warrant, to be Regional Commissioners, or by 22 other Sub Regional Commissioners.

No provision has been made for Members of Parliament to have any function, even consultative, in this system. Nor will they be protected in government shelters.

THE GOVERNMENT HAS intentionally misled Parliament and local councils about the existence of these Emergency Powers Bills. The Bills described above were approved in 1983 by the Cabinet's Home Defence Committee, 'HD'. HD is chaired by the Home Secretary, then Leon Brittan, and includes junior defence

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minister John Stanley and his counterparts from all other Whitehall departments. HD in turn reports to the main Cabinet defence committee, chaired by Mrs Thatcher.

Copies of the Bills they approved — stamped 'Secret' — are now stockpiled in safes in each Whitehall ministry, and in regional offices such as Cardiff, Birmingham, Newcastle, and Edinburgh. Soon after the draft Bills were agreed, the Home Office appointed a retired senior legal official, Mr Peter Harvey, to be the author of the further voluminous Regulations which the government would make under the new Acts.

Mr Harvey, the retired Legal Adviser to the Department of Education and Science, began drafting these Regulations late in 1983. Harvey answers to a secret committee, usually known by the initials HD(O)L. Officially HD(O)L is the War Legislation subcommittee of the Official Committee on Home Defence, one of a group of such committees which have been working on the new Home Defence plans.

> If in time of war it were to be considered necessary to take any special legislative powers for the defence of the United Kingdom, this would, of course, be a matter for the Government and Parliament of the day.

Even more disingenuous is the Home Office *Emergency Planning Guidance* handbook, which was issued to local authorities earlier this summer. This says, untruthfully, that:

> it is difficult to speculate on precisely what powers Parliament would approve at particular times

But the detailed Emergency Powers Bills had been printed two years before this was written, and officials can have no difficulty 'speculating' on what laws Parliament would be required to pass. Indeed the entire GDA system *depends* on providing the military authorities with the new powers.

IN COUNTRY LANES and city streets next week, the second phase of Brave Defender will begin. The exercise involves about 200 key points (KPs). This lasts from 6 to 13 September. During this phase, the 5,000 strong 'hostile' forces, including SAS and Royal Marine regiments, will attempt to infiltrate and attack each of the key points. The defending soldiers will maintain static guard posts, with larger 'mobile reactions forces' moving in to reinforce 'threatened' key points.

Soldier magazine

Civilian cars being searched at a military roadblock. Exercise Brave Defender will test Emergency Powers Bills enabling military commanders to control movement to and through Ground Defence Areas

In his *Who's Who* entry, Mr Harvey describes himself as a 'Consultant' to the Legal Adviser's Branch of the Home Office. Speaking this week from his home in Weybridge, Mr Harvey refused to describe his work; 'I'm not saying what my current employment in the Home Office is', he told us, 'you've no business to ring me up like this'. The Home Office said that it was not possible to 'discuss the individual work of civil servants'.

Although government statements have acknowledged that an Emergency Powers Act 'might' be proposed in a crisis, ministers and officials have repeatedly tried to pretend that no one now knows what such Bills might contain. In his letter to Lord Hatch, admitting the existence of Ground Defence Areas, Lord Glenarthur claimed that 'the armed forces have no special powers within GDAs and that US forces in this country are subject to British law and must act within it in both peace and war'.

This was followed by the carefully misleading statement:

The official list of key points being tested in the exercise is being kept secret until the last minute, in order to prevent CND and peace movement protests. But we have obtained details of many Brave Defender key points.

These include Liverpool, Hull, Marchwood (Southampton), Dover and Barry docks, Manchester Ringway airport, and the US depot at Burtonwood. Defending these sites from antiwar protesters and saboteurs alike is a critical part of the secret 1983 agreement with the United States.

Key points being 'attacked' next week include army bases, RAF airfields, such as Northolt in west London, and radio and TV transmitters. Some of them are real wartime key points; others have been designated as such for the exercise. The 65,000 defending troops will operate on public and private land around the bases ('with the agreement of the landowners', it is claimed), as well as on their perimeters. The Ministry claims that 'any disturbance to the public will be kept to a minimum'.

During Brave Defender, SAS troops and other attackers will wear plain clothes, and will be allowed to use subterfuge and deception to get to their targets. They will carry concealed (but unloaded) weapons, and mock explosives in ordinary cars. Pretending to meet with subversive British groups, some of the SAS attackers will frequent restaurants, parks and pubs — which undercover defenders may have under surveillance. But no one else will know that these games are going on. And the attackers and defenders don't know who is playing in the exercise.

Bombs and thunderflashes and blank ammunition will be let off inside and outside military establishments, activities which are expected to flood the police with worried phone calls about terrorist activity. With the police guard down because of the exercise, real terrorists might even have a better opportunity to get through.

The disasters have begun. Explosive experts were called out at the beginning of this week in Inverness, after an explosion at a building society office in the town. In fact, a soldier had let off thunderflashes which had been issued to him for Brave Defender. Gloucestershire police are investigating an incident last week when smoke rockets were used to attack a restaurant.

Civil servants warned army planners more than a year ago that the unprecedented level of public military activity planned for Brave Defender was likely to be highly provocative to peace groups and the uncommitted public alike. So the Ministry has deliberately underplayed or avoided any connection to nuclear weapons. No nuclear weapons sites are included in the exercise as key points.

But British sensitivities are likely to be touched by the inclusion of two US bases in exercise plans. These are Burtonwood, a giant US Army arms depot near Warrington and Bentwaters/Woodbridge, a US Air Force base in East Anglia. Seven hundred American troops will be patrolling these bases and their GDAs.

Another site which is likely to be sensitive is Manchester's Ringway Airport. The civil airport — which is intended to be a major centre for US reinforcements in real war plans — is wholly owned by Manchester District Council and the greater Manchester Council, both leading members of the local authorities' Nuclear Free Zone movement.

Council leaders are angry that the airport authorities have not cleared the exercise with them in advance. Labour defence spokesman Denzil Davies attacked the exercise plans as 'the usual British desire for secrecy. The Emergency Powers Bills have not been discussed in the Commons. It is extraordinary that Ministers have made no statement about them. The public should know.' Liberal front bench spokesman Paddy Ashdown added that, 'the plans hand Britain over... at worst, to rule under the Americans. They should be debated in Parliament.' □

Next week: Britain as a US 'Communication Zone'.

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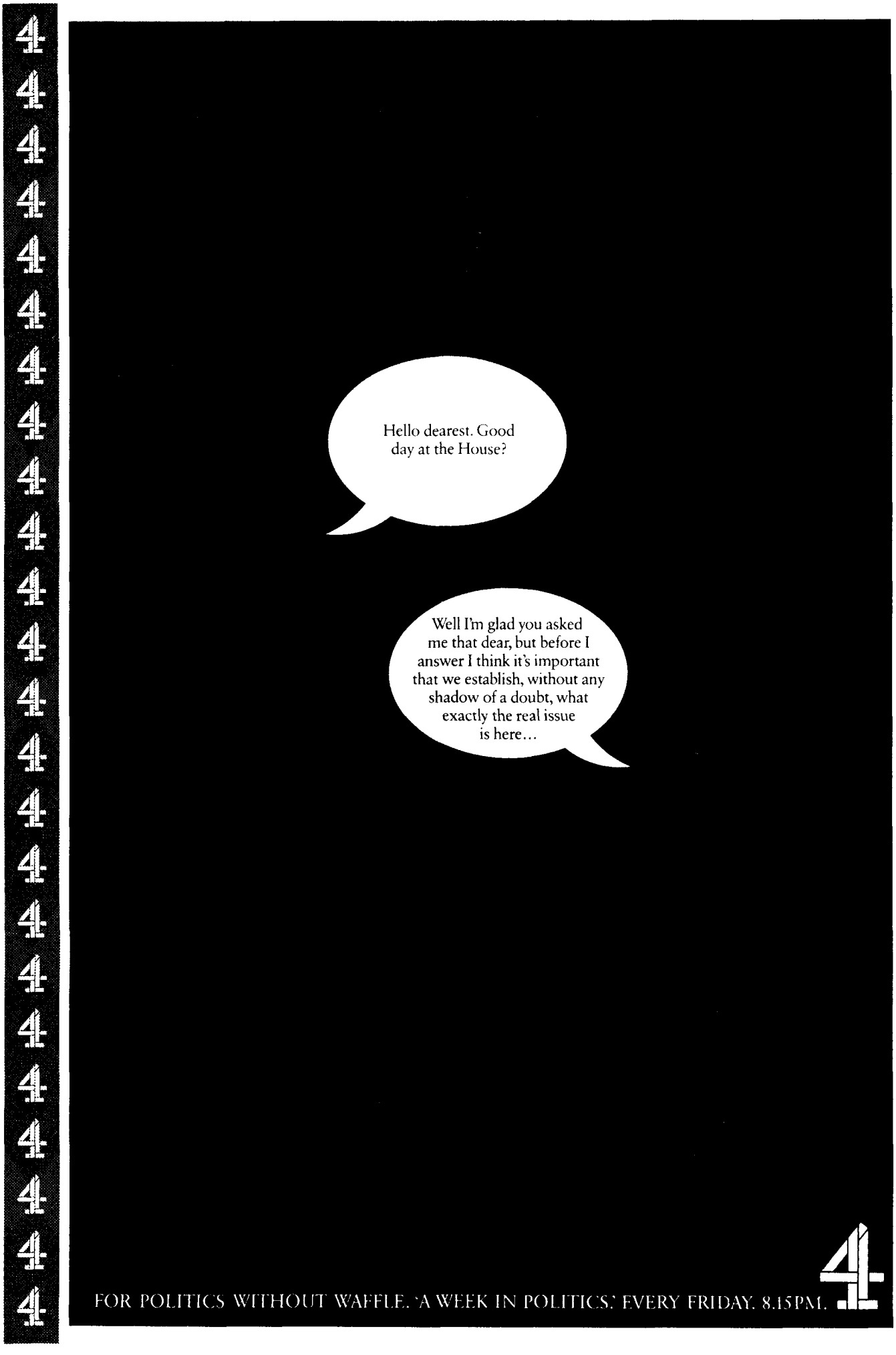
Hello dearest. Good day at the House?
Well I'm glad you asked me that dear, but before I answer I think it's important that we establish, without any shadow of a doubt, what exactly the real issue is here...
FOR POLITICS WITHOUT WAFFLE. 'A WEEK IN POLITICS.' EVERY FRIDAY. 8.15PM.

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Joy Warren

How to keep Labour out: 1, cover yourself in garlic. . .

LABOUR PARTY

POLITICS BY THE SEA

In 1983, on the Isle of Wight, 1,828 people voted Labour — the party's worst result anywhere. CAROLINE REES went down among the boats to see if there was a spark of life left

AUGUST IS carnival time on the Isle of Wight, and it's not all royal regattas and coloured lights. For this year saw the first-ever Garlic Festival — complete with Garlic Queen, helicopter rides (£9 for five minutes), and local fayre (garlic, mostly) — organised to raise money for a community centre in the village of Newchurch. The island's first commercial crop was lifted six years ago, and they're aiming to cultivate a 'distinctive' local strain.

It was here, in a mild drizzle, that I caught up with Liberal MP Steve Ross. Looking a bit weary — and trailing a plait of the dreaded bulbs around between handshakes — he seemed almost relieved that someone should wrest him away from local dignitaries and constituents' problems.

Ross is not standing for re-election because he says he's old (59) and because six-day-a-week community politics can be an exhausting life in Britain's biggest constituency; and he hadn't *really* wanted to stand again *last* time. He doesn't believe, as island legend seems to, that Liberal support stems, even chiefly, from the fact that he's 'a nice bloke and a good constituency MP'. He thinks they're creating their own impetus politically, especially since the Labour Party has virtually deserted the battlefield.

Ross won the seat in 1974 after a financial 'scandal' involving the sitting member ended over 60 years of Tory control. But the Tories still pose a very real threat, able to rely on a hardcore vote of some 33,000 from an electorate of just over 120,000. (The Liberals reckon *they* can count on 15,000 traditional Methodist-inspired crosses on the ballot paper.) 'The Tories are *livid* at losing this seat', says Ross, and are refusing to grant the island 'assisted area status' in retaliation. 'If the Tories were organised, they'd be pushing us up against the wall', admits County Council leader Morris Barton, 'but they're so inept.'

Unemployment is high, ranging between 10 per cent and 15 per cent, but many people are reluctant to leave for the mainland. Labour's base has faded with the industrial jobs, trade unionism is weak, and the Liberals benefit most from what movement there is. (Barton claims they've got the union vote just about 'wrapped up'.) The British Hovercraft Corporation at Cowes is the island's major industrial employer, and the County Council is currently looking to the Government to place defence orders with the form for amphibious craft. Thatcher, for her part, is not impressed.

Three months ago, Labour selected financial planning consultant Kenn Pearson as prospective parliamentary candidate — the first non-Militant for 11 years. This pleases Constituency Secretary Robert Jones, who, some say, is conducting a personal vendetta against the island's Militant 'faction' via the pages of *Tribune* and *Labour Weekly* in the belief that it will 'kick the party into some semblance of electoral shape'. Along the way, the general management committee has seen fit to ban *all* non-party literature. *Militant* though is still sold on the street corners where, say supporters, custom is on the increase.

Labour itself has no street stalls, no councillors, and scant public presence. A two-hour meet-the-candidate seminar in the Labour Hall in Ryde was attended by eight of the more keen 'rank and file' members. The candidate went through party policy — non-nuclear conventional defence, jobs and industry, no NHS privatisation — but 12,000 Labour votes have been snatched by the Liberals over the last 15 years and I got no sense that Labour has a coherent strategy to attract them back.

Over 70 per cent of islanders own their own homes, agriculture dominates over industry, and the ethnic population numbers a few hundred. To win, Labour would have to look much further afield for friends than they are used to. Perhaps they should do something completely different to win hearts and minds for a socialist alternative. Party officers reject the notion that there might be a role for Labour other than competing in elections in an apparently unwinnable area. Says Chairperson, Steve Moorcroft: 'The only objective which springs to mind is winning elections.' 'Anything else', adds secretary Robert Jones, 'is a diversion.'

For Militant supporter Gerry Dominey, 'There's no scope in trying to out-Liberal the Liberals'. You just 'have to keep plugging away'. Colleague Martin Cair agrees. Increased membership is vital (at present, new members 'literally stumble into the Labour Hall' as if by accident), but there was an upturn in support in local elections last time round — without the party doing anything — and greater interest is being shown by Labour's Head Office in Walworth Road. 'We're getting the "bus" (for mobile campaigning). It won't bring about socialism, but it's something.'

Younger members, like Charlene, want to see social events, rock gigs, bringing in more youthful enthusiasm. Someone else suggested these should be backed up with some more weighty theory. Through it all, self-appointed 'chief of operations' Jones's contributions remained dispirited: 'It's a pathetic number', he said, quite accurately, of Labour's inability to stand more than ten candidates for 43 places on the council. 'It makes you wonder just what the Labour Party has been doing. The major weakness we identified is there is no organisation at all in local branches . . . We've become accustomed to the inevitability of defeat.'

True though this undoubtedly is, there was something about the way he put it. Cynical browbeating seems destined to send nothing but a cloud of despondency over any newly-emergent sparks of life. The campaign against Militant is a *luxury*, surely, and certainly not edifying for the casual inquirer.

SEAVIEW, SAYS MP Steve Ross, is 'the snootiest place on the island'. All yacht-club blazers and walking the spaniel in plimsolls and those green sleeveless quilted jackets favoured by horsey types. And boats, more boats. Seaside areas, where tourists demand an apolitical subservience, are almost invariably Conservative. But there are dissidents, and people who recognise that unemployment in the Midlands is bad business for the hotels. But it is the Liberals who are getting all the 'graduates and young businesswomen', claims council leader Morris Barton; the people who would have filled the Labour Party in the '60s. He also attacks what he terms the 'cosy'

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relationship between the Tories and Labour, designed to 'squeeze' the Liberals. 'People are aware of the cynicism.' Ironically, if Labour win back more than a few thousand votes, they will be handing over the island to a Conservative MP. This could however provide an easier focus for opposition. It is, as *The Times* pointed out at the last election, a constituency 'where the tactical voter is king'. □

OPINION POLLS

DON'T TELL US WE'LL TELL YOU

Would trade union leaders, meeting for a problem-packed Congress this week, be more successful if they made more effort to find out their members' views? NORMAN WEBB argues that it's easier than you think

OPINION POLLSTERS share with doctors and lawyers the problem of being cornered at a party and forced to talk shop. The other professions have better ways than we have of countering such attacks, but such experiences among others lead me to believe that as a whole the public is broadly informed about our findings and has some kind of qualified confidence in them. This is despite some well known cock-ups such as those of MORI and NOP at the recent Brecon & Radnor by-election. (Gallup is not free of this criticism — we came a cropper at Hillhead.)

One group tends to lack this basic goodwill. Trade union officials frequently bridle, manifest considerable distrust and may go so far as to accuse us of cutting across their own lines of consultation, perverting democracy, and being agents of the Tory press. Even Tam Dalyell, who should know better, accuses the opinion polls of 'prostituting politics'. Judging by what some politicians manage for themselves, little help is needed from us.

The trade unions seem to have had a change of heart. Last month a press release was issued describing a poll carried out among Notts miners by an organisation called Popular Polling. It reported the miners' answers on a series of questions relating principally to the threatened breakaway of the Notts area of the NUM. Popular Polling is sponsored by some trade unions, and its press release contains a message from Ray Buckton strongly advocating unity amongst miners.

Now this is a very positive development. If the unions build upon this in making use of soundings of public opinion they are likely to act more in tune with their own members' wishes and more effectively in their negotiations with employers and with government. Patrick Edlin, who runs Popular Polling, appears to have done a workmanlike job on this occasion (though there are defects in the work which I have written to him privately about).

But in some ways, the emergence of this poll can also be looked upon as a retrograde step. Popular Polling could have commissioned this project from an established opinion research company. That way they could have supervised all steps of the operation and simultaneously make use of existing interviewer teams, existing professionals within those organisations, the existing general expertise and the greater acceptability, to the mass media at least, of a known name. These advantages are considerable both in terms of cost and impact on the media. They chose to go it alone(though I understand they have had professional advice). This desire to be pure and independent suggests some lack of confidence in the establishment, if it can be called that, of the opinion pollsters.

Now it is certainly a fact that much of our opinion polling is sponsored by newspapers, and rather more from right-wing newspapers than the left. Gallup itself has had an exclusive contract for national political opinion polling with the *Daily Telegraph* for over 20 years. We write our own material, edited only by length after consultation, but there are no right-wing influences in our results. Had this ever been attempted we would have quit. The *Telegraph* has claimed to detect — with pleasure since it proves a point — a slight pro-Labour tendency in our figures, though for the life of me I cannot.

Among the opinion polling companies taken together, there is nevertheless a very lopsided spectrum of clients. The Conservative Party, both in and out of electoral periods spends considerable sums on political research, the Labour Party relatively little, and the Alliance Parties less still, though the last are more constrained by cash than anything else.

I HAVE NO doubt that the Left does not use this very important tool of sounding public opinion to anything like the same extent as the Right. I will put it down to three attitudes. The first is a mistrust, baseless, of established opinion polling companies. The second is the kind of naive nostalgia for the old ways of campaigning, covering sincere and passionate oratory at public meetings, marches and demonstrations, and the feeling that if you put your incontrovertibly sensible views in front of the public they are bound to back you. The third is a feeling that there is certainly not enough money to fund the kind of research necessary.

This is in my view a total misconception. Charities with far less available money than political parties commission polls from Gallup and others because they have no inhibitions about putting their case before the public in as effective a way as possible. Thus we see in the press findings about the willingness of people to donate their organs, how many carry kidney donor cards, to take a single example. Pressure groups of various kinds feel able to commission polls. This is particularly true of those concerned with the abortion controversy, with euthanasia, with protection of wildlife, and so on. Such organisations are not funded to anything like the same extent as political parties, though some right-wing pressure groups may be.

What sort of costs are we talking about? Of course they depend upon a particular population group to be studied, the length of the questionnaire, and the complexity of the analysis among other things. It is not untypical to be quoted a national survey on a particular topic for prices ranging from £3,000-£5,000. This is not high for any organisation which exists on the national scale. Even cheaper than this are the possibilities of getting a national survey on what is known as an Omnibus survey (a very cost effective method by which questions on a number of quite separate topics are asked in the same interview with consequent cost sharing benefits). Four or five questions on a given topic, for which the answers can be analysed in great detail, can be purchased for round about £1,000, and there are more than half a dozen research companies offering this service. An individual person could conceivably afford this sum if they felt passionately that they wanted to know about public opinion on a particular subject.

I could be accused of touting for business, but I'm not. Opinion polling is not commercially important to any of the British companies that do it. Gallup is typical of the profession in that it represents less than 5 per cent of our research business. But we share with others the passionate belief that the sounding of public opinion is an integral part of the democratic process in Britain and will become more important in the future. Putting a cross on a ballot form every four or five years may be vital to democracy, but it does not tell those who govern us very much about the feelings of the governed. No party really knows about support for individual items in its manifesto, and cannot govern on the assumption that a vote for the party means blind acceptance of all its electoral programme. Events can occur in the life of a government that have no relation to its manifesto (The Falklands, football hooliganism?) Mrs Thatcher's popularity, once so high is now very low. Who says so, with any authority? Only the opinion polls. Are trade union leaders, regarding themselves as the servants of the rank and file, truly aware of, let alone reflecting, the opinions of their members? Some of them appear to be taking at least a first step to find out. With reservations I can only applaud it. □

Norman Webb is a Director of The British Gallup Poll and Secretary General of the worldwide Gallup International group.

This England

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□ Tory councillor, Dr Nonny Tiffany, who recently told youngsters on the dole to eat porridge, pick berries and drink water has had her house at Oxford daubed with porridge and the letters PLO — standing for 'Porridge Liberation Organisation' — in red paint. — *The Mirror* (Rob Morrow)

□ Lady Sayer, in reply to my earlier letter, questions my qualifications to enter into the Okehampton by-pass controversy. She is obviously unaware that the feudal Barony of Okehampton was the earliest English title held by my ancestors, that Okehampton Castle is my ancestral home, and that I would be the first to defend the Deer Park if it still existed, but it does not.' — *Letter in The Daily Telegraph* (Martin Green).

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TARGET OF THE MEAN TESTS

Social security creates as much hopelessness in political circles as it does among claimants. But next week, the National Campaign Against Social Security Cuts is organising a week of action before the shutter comes down, at the end of the week, on discussion on the Green Paper on social security reforms. Here ANGUS ERSKINE draws out the politics of the issue and main guidelines for equitable reform and ROB EDWARDS talks to some claimaints

WE CAN ALL agree that social security is designed to help the poor. We can all agree that social security should be simple. On the basis of that consensus, we have been able to imagine that social security is some technical scheme, dreamed up by academics, administered by bureaucrats and sustained by a politically neutral will.

But social security has been lost in the realm of the academic and the technical, the preserve of the professionals and the professors. From inside this world, the real lives of the millions of individual people dependent on social security are more remote and abstract than the statistics the system depends on. But social security isn't only for the poor. Unless we are very rich, we need income support when we are sick, when we are old, when we have children or when we are unemployed. We all pay for social security and most of us receive it at some time or other in our lives. The 'consensus' avoids the question — what is social security for?

Social security is in fact a profoundly political issue. It is about why some people have so much more than they need, and others so much less; it concerns the distribution of resources. So, a debate about the most controversial issues of a wealth tax, or a maximum limit on incomes, or an incomes policy, is also a debate about social security.

The debate also includes issues like the balance between cash in the pocket and public facilities. How far should the costs of bringing up children be met through child benefit and how far through collective provision of nurseries, crèches and toy libraries? The debate includes personal relations. Social security policies impose particular sets of relations on to men and women. Financial dependence is policed through social security. The way social security is paid, its rules and regulations are both practical and political issues.

> 'The present system expresses the prejudices, moralities and interests of the State, over and above any attempt to meet need'

For instance, similar needs are not treated similarly. Women are treated differently from men, although they have the same need for money. Two women or two men living together are treated differently from a woman and a man living together. Young adults are treated as dependent upon their parents. Those who have given up their jobs are treated differently from those who have been made redundant. Those in receipt of housing benefit, with non-dependent adults in the house are expected to receive rent from them, whether they do or not, whereas there is no such assumption in the provision of tax relief for owner occupiers. The present system expresses the prejudices, moralities and interests of the State, over and above any attempt to meet need.

The present scheme is very complicated to administer. A scheme which is well administered must be effective in delivering benefits. At the moment, claimants suffer from poorly paid and poorly trained DHSS officials working in understaffed offices. Those who have the most straightforward claims, or those who fit most neatly into the administrative categories of the DHSS are likely to fare better than those with interlocking needs and entitlements. For the rest, claiming is a humiliating process in which the clients of the service — the claimants — have absolutely no control over the 'servants' who administer it. Making the DHSS accountable to claimants is a difficult task. We cannot begin to reform the relationship while *the* purpose, and ethos, of the DHSS is to ration benefits and exclude needs.

ANY PROPOSALS for reform or radical change must deal with these practical issues. Because of these features, the social security system is unable to meet even its own limited objective of alleviating poverty. The Government's Green Paper on social security doesn't deal with these problems. And it certainly won't meet the objectives it set itself.

The government argues that the social security system should be made simpler. It is proposing to do this by cutting social security, which in practice will make it more complex.

Take, for example, the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme. It may not be equitable but it is simple: the more you earn, the more you pay into the scheme and the more you get out when you retire. It is also cheap to administer, for the costs of collecting contributions and distributing benefits are shared nationally.

What the government proposes is that we all have a compulsory 'choice' between competing private pension plans. On what grounds can we assess these plans? The extravagance of their promises? The glossiness of their brochures? I 'choose' the State scheme — but that's one choice that I will no longer have. Private pension provision will be much more complicated.

Another of its stated aims is to concentrate help on those most in need, to 'target' them, in the new jargon. The proposals will subject more people and more of their needs to the means test. Yet the means test is one of the major causes of the increasing complexity and inefficiency of the present system. Not only can the needs of real, individual people not be simply slotted into the qualifying categories of the means test; the means test puts off many of those who most need help. 'Targetting' implies that there would be a precision, an accuracy in the delivery of benefits But 50 per cent of those entitled to means-tested Family Income Supplement don't claim it, not very good targetting.

And does it target 'need' — or the powerless? The means-testing of maternity grants, the new family credit scheme and the recent announcement that child benefit won't rise in line with inflation, all these changes, justified in terms of concentrating help on those who need it, are aimed at making women more financially dependent on the men that they live with.

SO WHAT SHOULD the aim of social security be? One aim, which it does not fulfil is of alleviating poverty. Poverty anyway is not only about starving. It is about not having the resources to enjoy the accepted standards of living of the majority of the population. What poverty in Britain means is social isolation, hardship, dependence and being excluded from your share of what your country has to offer.

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THE ONLY big treat *Janet Hardie* has had in 18 years was when she went to see Frank Sinatra at the Albert Hall in London last year. She entered a competition by acquiring a slot-meter television and won. She was given a ticket for the show, her train fare from Scotland and £10 for a taxi. She was put up in a hotel in Kensington and treated to a seven-course meal.

'It was beautiful', she says, 'but it was a bit confusing to me, I'm telling you. I didn't even know what I was eating.' To show what she and her children usually eat, she pulled the one item of shopping she had just bought out of her battered bag — a packet of fishcakes.

Janet is 43, with two marriages behind her (widowed in the first and separated in the second). She is sitting on the edge of a chair in a community house in a run-down part of Dedridge, Livingston, a depressed and depressing new town just off the M8 between Edinburgh and Glasgow. She has been dependent on social security benefits for the last seven years.

'I just cannae live. When I had money an' that, the children were getting better food. But now you can only live from day to day, fishcakes an' that, it's terrible. The only kind of luxury I've got is a smoke.'

After deductions for fuel and clothing and with her rent paid, she and her two children staying at home have about £36 a week to live on. With nothing else to do, her 17 year old daughter Rhonda usually stays in bed until lunchtime — except on 'giro day' when she's up to greet the post. Janet says she cannot afford to run her gas heating all the time, so she just puts it on for an hour in the morning and an hour in the evening. For the rest of the time she uses a one-bar electric fire. She gets very cold in the winter.

She recounts in angry detail how she has recently been accused of forging her daughter's signature on a giro that had been stolen. 'They make you feel like you're obligated to them. They make me feel worse than policemen do,' she says. 'They make you feel rotten an' everything, it's terrible.'

KENNETH GASKIN dreams of emigrating to New Zealand. He has a relative out there who's doing quite well for himself. Britain, he says, is broke and 'the system' is rotten. He has found out that the journey would cost about £800. His dream is never likely to become a reality. Since Kenneth lost his furniture delivery job at the end of last year, he, his wife Vera and their two very young children have been surviving on £62 a week benefit for food, clothing and electricity. 'It's just a complete struggle all the time. You cannae do nothing, you've no social life. If you want to go out, you're starving all week' he says. The poverty is putting a strain on their marriage.

'We got this furniture from a credit company. Then when I was working they sent me a letter saying "You are a hungry customer, there's £400 waiting for you, just send the letter back". So the temptation's there and you just do it. At first we owed them £800, but it's up to £1900 now with interest. They say it'll take eight years to pay it off.'

As well as paying £6 a week to the credit company, the Gaskins give the 'Provy woman' (from Provident Personal Credit Ltd) £1 a week, their bank £5 a week in repayment of a loan and 'the curtain man' £2.00 a fortnight. They virtually live on a diet of sausages, eggs and beans. They have a chicken every other Sunday.

Kenneth is large, 23 and balding. He hasn't bought a pair of shoes for two years. Vera is small, frail, with large holes in the toes of her slippers. Their corporation house is small and tidy, with the television on constantly to stem the inevitable boredom. They are both surprisingly good-humoured most of the time, though they both suffer moments of desperation when they think up desperate solutions. They hate the DHSS officers.

'They are dead cheeky. They seem to think that they are giving you money personally out of their pockets. They thrive on you begging. I think if you went down and maybe kissed their feet, they'd be a bit nicer to you. They want to know when you shit last.'

Recently, because he had lost his wallet, Mr Gaskin went to the DHSS office and asked for an urgent needs payment. He pointed out that his wife had Hodgkins disease and needed money to travel to the local hospital for regular chemotherapy treatment. That couldn't be true, he was told, as no such treatment was done at Bangour

hospital. In fact chemotherapy is carried out at the hospital by Dr Margaret Cook, the wife of the local Labour MP, Robin Cook.

MARGARET AHMED wears a smart red dress from the nearly-new shop, black make-up and raven-black hair. She is striking, proud of her looks and 52. Her husband, Aziz, diabetic, nervous and almost too frightened to talk, is 57 and will never work again. He used to work on the buses in Glasgow and both of them used to run a shop. For the last six years they have been living on benefit.

After deductions for electricity, she and her husband have to live on £38.95 a week. They get by, but not very easily. She remembers clearly when she last bought a new piece of clothing — a new dress five years ago. She feels guilty about smoking. She had been abroad twice in recent years, once to Greece and once to Spain. Both trips were prizes her daughter Elaine won in beauty competitions, firstly as Miss Livingston and secondly as Miss West Lothian.

With relish Margaret tells of how she has had four successive and cheap reconditioned cookers courtesy of the DHSS. The first one (an electric) exploded twice, the second time scorching her 14 year old daughter's nightdress and blowing a hole in her kettle. It was replaced with a gas cooker which was prone to serious leakages. This was in turn replaced with another gas cooker which also

turned out to be faulty. Now, after much complaining, she at last has a cooker that works reasonably well.

'But you see I'm all right because I complain' says Margaret, who has become a thorn in the flesh of the local DHSS office. 'I worry about those who don't complain'.

WHEN IRENE BARCLAY, Dedridge's unpaid full-time welfare rights worker angrily accused Margaret Thatcher and Norman Fowler of 'conspiring to murder people', I was disbelieving. Surely this was an emotive, if understandable, exaggeration? I had been impressed by the resilience of all the claimants, the hopelessness disguised as humour, in the face of indignities that non-claimants find it hard to imagine.

Then, thanks to Robin Cook MP, the case of 23-year-old Brian Brown came to light. On 27 May, because of the new board and lodging regulations (since declared illegal), his supplementary benefit was drastically cut and he was made homeless. He slept rough for a few days and sank into depression. On 7 June he had a cup of coffee in an all-night café in Edinburgh station. Soon afterwards he climbed up to the city's high North Bridge and threw himself to his death.

Rob Edwards

All photos: Chris Hill/Contact

Social security could have many more purposes than that of alleviating poverty. It could, in tandem with a reformed taxation system, aim to reduce income inequality. It could aim to recognise past services to the community. It could help share costs which some individuals meet alone, but which benefit the whole community, such as caring for the sick or disabled. It could provide a compensation for those who have experienced a disadvantage that might have happened to any of us.

If these were the aims of social security, and they were achieved poverty would also be abolished.

As an illustration, the aim for these three groups could be:

- Children. The aim of social security could be to transfer income from those who do not have children to those who do.
- For the elderly. It could be recognition by the community of the past contribution by the elderly to our present wealth.
- For the disabled. Social security could provide some compensation for the difficulties which accompany disability.

How can these aims be achieved? First, the most simple system is to have one form of

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benefit, a non means-tested, non contributory benefit.

In only one area is a means-tested benefit justified, in housing. This is because housing costs vary dramatically in different parts of the country, and the financial advantages of owner occupation over renting are enormous. The best way to provide help with housing costs is to keep rents down as much as possible, through national subsidies for public housing and rent control in the private sector. This could be coupled with ending the tax advantages to owner occupiers making the balance between the costs of renting and buying more equitable. But, there may still need to be some element of means-tested housing benefit.

Benefits like unemployment benefit are at present contributory through national insurance but not means-tested. Of the £22.5 billion needed to pay for these out-of-work benefits, only £0.5 billion per annum comes from the investment income from past contributions to the 'national insurance fund.' £19 billion comes directly from current employers' and employees' contributions and £3 billion from the exchequer. The insurance fund is a myth; it is simply a non-progressive form of taxation. Social security should be funded, just as defence is, from general taxation.

CURRENTLY, some people receive reliefs or allowances through the taxation system, and others receive benefits through the social security system. Many people receive both. This process is confused, inefficient and inequitable. Tax reliefs are worth more the richer you are, whilst means tested benefits are worth more the poorer you are. The tax and benefit system should be harmonised.

Social security is built upon assumptions which are known to be untrue; that all people live in families and all men work and support them. Parents don't usually take responsibility for their children when they are adults. Paid work is not the preserve of men. Social security should not be based on these assumptions, but on how people do live their lives.

Although legislative lip service has been paid to the concept of equal treatment since the mid '70s, a couple can still opt to be treated separately for tax purposes, but can't for benefit purposes. The social security and the tax system should be based on the principle of equal and individual entitlement for all adults.

Any change in the social security system must be accompanied by an overhauling of personal and company taxation. Profitable companies should pay more tax than they do at present. Personal taxation should be based on narrower and more progressive tax bands, and the many tax-avoidance loopholes closed.

Social security is part of a mechanism of redistribution. We must put forward a different set of principles from those of the Tories. It is possible to develop a simple form of social security. Based on benefits which are not means-tested, it would be part of an overall re-distribution of income and wealth in Britain. □

Angus Erskine is Vice Chairperson of the Lothian Review of Social Security.

For further details of the proposals developed by the Lothian Review of Social Security, contact LRSS, 2 Caledonian Place, Edinburgh. The arguments, on which this article is based, are expanded in their two reports, £1.20 each from the above address.

Hot news exclusive! Actor has sex

Paul Foot

THE MORE national newspapers there are, the more difficult it is to tell them apart. It used to be argued that the existence of so many national newspapers, apparently catering for such different audiences, and competing against one another in news, features and pictures was the surest guarantee of journalistic originality and distinction. Simply because each newspaper was trying to be better than its competitors, each was certain to keep its distinctive quality.

In spite of all the wailing about economic difficulties of running a national newspaper, there are always new ones starting, and even thriving. In the last few years we've had the *Daily Star* and the *Mail on Sunday*, both brand new. The Shah (daily and Sunday) is confidently heralded. That will make ten huge national dailies and seven huge national Sundays.

The competition between them is furious. Except when one or other of them is threatened with a strike, the proprietors really do seem to hate each other, and have now taken to suing each other over 'their' exclusives. But the competition doesn't give us more originality, only more of the same.

One reason for this is that the papers are so obsessed by their rivals that they become parasitic on them. It used to be an old Fleet Street rule that the first editions of the other papers were banned from the newsroom. Now the editions are rushed round each news desk in a terrified scramble to see if the others have got 'a story' which they haven't got. Enormous effort is expended in 'intelligence' about rivals' advance plans. The 'spoiler', a half-story or a concocted story which 'spoils' the rivals' efforts, is at a premium.

The 'spoiler' journalist supplants the 'self-starter'. The 'self-starter' was hired to start things by his or her own efforts or ideas. Such a person is now suspect, simply because what he or she thinks or tries to start may not 'spoil' what the rivals are doing. So the parasitism spins on downwards in an apparently irresistible spiral of declining standards.

Last Sunday, the *News of the World* was in a good position finally to rout its rivals, the *Sunday Mirror* and the *People*. The latter two papers, which manage to compete with one another from inside the same building, were not published because of a lock-out of print-workers. But the *News of the World* seemed nonplussed by having nothing to sponge off. It fell back on an old carcase. MY AFFAIR WITH ANDY'S GIRL by Chris Quinten roared the front page, over a story which the *News of the World* modestly named: 'Coronation Street Exclusive of the Year'.

'Hunky soap star Chris Quinten has talked frankly of his romance with Prince Andrew's girl "Katie" Rabett' revealed the sensational 'exclusive' first paragraph.

All the text on the front page and no less than three pages of the inside were then devoted to Mr Quinten's 'incredible nights' with Andy's sweetheart. A taste of the quality of this story was: 'When you're in bed it's the only time you can really get together and be passionate with each other. You can say: "I love you" with your body instead of just saying it across the candles over dinner'.

This 'story' was parasitic several times over. For the past five years or so, Mr Quinten who plays the part of a mechanic in Coronation Street, has been forging a reputation for himself in the popular papers as a 'superstud'. Article after article quotes him on such themes as his four girls a week and how he knows just how to turn them on, and how many incredible nights he has had with them.

The 'story' of his exploits was nothing new. Indeed, the *News of the World* itself had reported as long ago as 28 October 1984 that Katie Rabett was dating Chris Quinten. The story was parasitic on Kate Rabett, who, in October 1984, wouldn't come out and make some exclusive quotes for the *News of the World*. It was parasitic on the royals. It was parasitic on a TV programme which has provided staple fare for all the other tabloids for the last three years.

It was even parasitic on the *News of the World* itself. The Sunday before last, the *News of the World* colour magazine front page had the awful Quinten smiling out of the cover, with the caption: WHERE'S CHRIS QUINTEN WHEN HE'S NOT IN THE STREET?

Nothing of any importance, merit or interest has taken place here, of course, except that Mr Quinten has been paid a large sum of money. And he won't be sorry about that. For one of the very few interesting facts about this preposterous bore is that he went bankrupt two years ago. In spite of the enormous sums he makes from Granada and from charging nearly £1,000 a time for appearing in public, he went bust in 1983, owing £54,801. He was discharged from bankruptcy in 1984 but his appetite for extra star status is unabated. And as long as he's prepared to describe an incredible night with a woman who is said (but not proven) to have gone out with a member of the Royal Family, almost any newspaper is prepared to feed it.

As I say, as soon as you think the depths have been plumbed, the newspapers — feeding off each other's garbage — go lower. Monday's *Sun* led the front page with a headline: EASTENDER IN DRINKS BENDER. It seemed that a woman who stars in the BBC soap opera *Eastenders* had got drunk in a Tenerife hotel and had a row with her boyfriend.

The *front page*, mind you. And the *lead*. 'Exclusive', naturally. □

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DIARY

Edinburgh

As any journalist knows, what you write in this week's paper goes into next week's dustbins. The *New Statesman*, I can now report, does better. It is also read inside the dustbin. Unlike the gadflies of television, I stayed on at the Edinburgh Festival, and very enjoyable it was too: ideal for a rainy summer. This allowed me to see a student production of *Endgame* directed by my nephew. He let me look at Nagg and Nell being squeezed into their honoured place as Hamm's parents, each in their own bin. As they die half way through the performance, suitable reading matter is needed for the confinement . . . So I watched as the lid was placed on a bent copy of the *New Statesman* and during the performance I tried to listen for the rustle of its pages.

○

I'd not realized how much *Endgame* is a gripping family drama. The key to its success on stage is the relationship between Hamm, who must dominate the proceedings from an armchair, and Clove his servant, who stands over him the whole time. The night I saw it, two memorable performances captured Beckett's appalling black humour as surely as the ingenious device of putting the old mum and dad into refuse bins. Family life, however, is bouncing back. I suppose this is a story of the '80s, much as Beckett's parentophobia captured the post-war atmosphere of the '50s. At dinner with some couples of my own age who had their children early, the discussion came round to the question of whether you allow your offspring to sleep with their lovers under the family roof. In our day we couldn't wait to leave home. Now, I was assured, things are different: parents are not so out of touch, lack of jobs and the level of youth wages mean that school-leavers are all too eager to stay on. There is, in short, only one way to get them out of the house: prohibition. Or, as one mother put it, 'We don't bring our lovers home, why should they?'

○

As I came back South I reflected on the pleasures of the Festival. Chief among these is the sheer amount it offered within the hilly, handsome confines of Edinburgh. On the day we saw three shows — and a lot of the enjoyment comes from seeing live performances — there were 532 other things to choose from, as well as 55 exhibitions, from 9 am to three the following morning. Then there was the added pleasure of writing 'Islander' on the excellent Epson PX-8 lap-portable that I borrowed so as not to be without a word-box. It even has a bright red stop key that reminds me of Mervyn Jones. Two of the painting exhibitions stay in my mind. A *Tribute to Wilkie* was nicely mounted at the Scottish National Gallery to mark the two hundredth anniversary of his birth. I'd not realized his importance as the key founder of British genre painting. I'd never seen *Pitlessie Fair* and didn't know of the existence of his *Village Politicians*, or the masterful rendition of the turning point in his own life, when he came to London, his *Letter of Introduction.* The price Scotland paid for its subordination is painfully evident in *The Chelsea Pensioners.* The exhibition's director artlessly eulogises this work, which was commissioned by the Duke of Wellington, and is a grovelling celebration of the Battle of Waterloo. Wilkie was paid the then greatest known sum for a canvass, 1200 guineas. So many wanted to see it when it went on show at the Royal Academy in 1822 that officials erected what was apparently the first crash barrier to protect a painting. Thus was a major Scottish talent bought off by England and Empire to ensure his ultimately secondary status.

○

Just around the corner, Edinburgh's Fruitmarket Gallery is still showing the first European Exhibition of the ex-Soviet artists Komar and Melamid. Their parody of Socialist Realism descends from Wilkie. It is good to hear people laugh out loud in an art gallery. All the same, I can't bring myself to endorse Peter Wollen's claim that the two artists regather the threads lost after Breughel. Rather, it seems to me that coming as dissidents from Moscow — they had a prominent role in the unofficial Belijaevo exhibition on 1974 that was bulldozed by the Soviet authorities — Komar and Melamid confirm that contemporary painting is only able to comment upon rather than address centrally the cultural and ideological issues of the day. There was no crash barrier at the Fruitmarket.

○

The Festival is not meant to be controversial yet there was also something strange about its mood. South Africa, for example, merely rumbled away: on the fringe, in the official festival and at the Book festival, there were South African events. I can just recall when the Anti-Apartheid movement was a massive politicising influence in Britain. Today it is yet another special interest. When LSE was occupied in 1968 this was in part precipitated by the issue of Southern Africa. Today in the United States students set up shanty towns on their campuses as they campaign for disinvestment, while politicians regard hostility to apartheid as part of their own domestic credentials. No equivalent response is felt in the UK any longer.

I suppose I should welcome this more parochial reflux. In a way it does illustrate a healthy sense of British powerlessness. Yet I do *not* welcome the passivity. In part because the City still has considerable leverage. More important, political cowardice over the race issue is again being demonstrated by our politicians. Although I have expressed my doubts over Neil Kinnock, there is no reason to question his personal commitment to the end of apartheid. On this issue he has an exceptionally creditable record. But now, of all times, Labour should be vociferous in its demand that Britain impose sanctions. It should be really angry and continuously militant on the issue, for it is in fact an ideal way of campaigning against racism here at home. Instead I don't recall a single statement or demand that's had any effective impact as the slow insurrection in South Africa trains a new generation for what will surely be the apocalyptic end of Boer racism.

Islander

ROGER WODDIS

Death of a salesman

In her Cabinet reshuffle the Prime Minister has excluded Cecil Parkinson, allegedly skilled in 'presenting' government policies

It ain't what you do,
It's the way that you do it,
It ain't what you say,
It's the clothes that you wear.
It needn't be true,
They can even pooh-pooh it,
As long as they're glued
To the gloss on your hair.

The road that you take
May be dark with disaster,
The garbage you talk
May be fit for the bin.
Your smile may be fake
And your feet made of plaster,
Provided they sigh
For the talc on your chin.

They'll learn to their cost
That you're dealing in shoddy,
But see how they run
At the sound of your knock.
How sad to have lost,
Such a mind, such a body,
Such flair when you flog
All your second-hand stock!

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Allan Tannenbaum/John Hillelson Agency

RULE BY WHIP, GUN AND FIRE

New evidence from a dossier handed to Botha by a church delegation last week indicates a horrifying police free-for-all. TOM McGURK reports

AS WHITE South Africa grows increasingly desperate, police have been given a *carte blanche* to crush black protest using whatever means they think necessary.

In the six weeks since the introduction of the State of Emergency about 2,000 people have been detained (with about half being subsequently released) and about 200 have been killed. Numerous black activists have 'disappeared', especially in the Eastern Cape region — a relatively new Argentina-style tactic. Under the Emergency Legislation, police and army are presumed to have always acted 'in good faith' unless the contrary is actually proved.

The detail of what this has meant to South Africa's black population has gone largely unreported, in part because when police 'go into' an area, they first order all journalists out. After police 'clean-up' operations, the first to go back in and document what has happened are the members of groups like Black Sash — a largely white women's progressive organisation — and the Civil Rights Association. The affidavits they and others have collected allege widespread use of beatings, electric torture, gassing, poisoning and murder by the police and army.

Meanwhile, the determination of the black population to drive out those who they see as the 'eyes and ears of the white oppressors' is causing serious problems for law and order Minister Louis Le Grange. Black policemen — recruited as the Namibian war and the burgeoning civil service stretched white numbers too thinly — have been used as a buffer during the recent battles. Huge numbers of them are in the Riot Police — in the front line in the townships war — and this has added an even more bitter racial dimension to the situation. In Eastern Cape townships so many black policemen have been driven out they are now being housed in special police compounds with their families; in other places their homes are under 24-hour armed guard.

On the other side of the townships' war are black schoolchildren. They are the younger brothers and sisters of the children who fought — and were eventually put down with huge casualties — in the 1976 Soweto riots, who are now in their 20s and forming the black leadership. The ages of those detained and killed is evidence that for the young teenagers what began as an effort to boycott their schools in the hope of changing the Bantu education system has now progressed to a head-on confrontation with the State. It is they who, increasingly, are carrying out the attacks on the homes of black policemen, township administrators, Bantu administration offices and black councillors. What must be worrying Le Grange is that if the morale of those blacks who have been recruited to police their own is broken, policing the townships at all may become impossible.

Above: a Black councillor and his family are burned to death for collaboration

THE PAINSTAKINGLY gathered affidavits portray a horrifying picture of what is happening 'out of sight' to the young militant blacks. Last week, a church delegation led by the Catholic Archbishop of Durban, Rev. Denis Hurley, presented P W Botha with a series of affidavits alleging recent criminal behaviour by police in the Eastern Cape area. Among those who witnessed the sworn affidavits were Nathanial R Jones, a United

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States Appeal Court judge. Botha said he would pass them on to the Attorney General for investigation. The *NS* has obtained copies and published below a selection from them for the first time.

Following the black boycott of white shops in the Eastern Cape area, police are retaliating by forcing people in the townships at gun-point to come out of their houses at night and clean up the streets. (They are also using their Emergency powers to close black shops.) This incident took place during one of these 'street-cleaning' operations.

Marie Qomoyi (59), Graaf Reinet
'A white policeman unknown to me entered the room. He said to me "Why didn't you come outside when called?" I said "Who called me?" He said "You ask?" and he hit me with a long sjambok (whip) across the back and face . . . At the time my daughter Marina (24) came in. She is 8½ months pregnant. She said "What are you doing to my mother?". A white policeman whipped her across the back and across her pregnant stomach. Her stomach bled and her dress showed the blood stains.'

Annie Gilbert (47), Graaf-Reinet.
'. . . I saw three policemen climb off the hippo [police van] and I told the children to keep out of sight. My son George (20) went to a house three doors away. As George entered the grounds I saw Bodkie [a policeman she knew] . . . He lifted his rifle, aimed at George and fired. George called out in pain, grasped his waist, sagged a little and staggered around the house and into the kitchen. I ran towards the house but Bodkie told me to stand still as I was also on the list . . .

He grabbed George, who was sitting down, by the back of his collar and dragged him out . . . George was bleeding and his mouth spewing. As he reached the gate he brought up a huge amount of froth and blood, and went completely limp. Three policemen climbed out of the hippo and with each holding an arm or a leg threw George into the hippo like a dead dog. I saw that my son James was also in the hippo and one other youth. I have not seen James since. I have been to the police station about James but they will not tell me where he is'.

Other sworn affidavits confirm Mrs Gilbert's story and also relate how later that night the police returned and broke all her windows with stones. Another woman of 70, Lena Rasmen, who swore in an affidavit that she was raped by two soldiers, has since had to go into hiding because of police harassment.

An earlier memorandum published by the Black Sash on police conduct in the Eastern Cape region in March details so many incidents of beatings with whips and batons in police cells of those arrested, that one can only conclude that it is by now the norm. On one occasion a group of Black Sash activists, including District Councillors Molly Blackburn from Port Elizabeth and Di Bishop from Capetown went to Uitenhage police station to look for some children who had been arrested. By accident they were misdirected in the police station and walked into a room where an actual beating was being conducted. Molly Blackburn's account reads

> 'I knocked at the door and walked in. I was deeply shocked to see a young man lying on the floor next to a table with his hands handcuffed behind his back and the handcuffs behind the table legs. Bending over him was a black policeman in civilian clothes with a long orange plastic whip. I saw him assault the young man as I walked in. I called out "Dear God, what do you think you are doing?" . . . The young man was bleeding from lacerations on the left side of his face and had blood on his mouth . . . One of my colleagues asked the people in the office whether this young man had been charged with any offence. They said "No". There were three other young men sitting on a bench against a wall, all appeared to have been assaulted'.

The memorandum also details over 50 complaints of very young children, many aged between four and eight, being shot by police with what is called 'bird-shot', a small bore shotgun-type lead. Few were shot in actual riot circumstances, and from the evidence one can only conclude that at times the police indulge in free-for-alls, simply shooting and wounding anyone they find on the streets. Later, when those shot attend for medical treatment, they find police waiting to arrest them. □

Police enemies are under 16

The most recent list of Emergency Detainees in the Johannesburg area indicates the ages of some of those who have been held for almost five weeks now. As of last Friday, all were denied visits from their parents: Guduka, Fanie (**Age 11**); Ndlovu, Cele and Millicent (Sisters **Ages 14 and 16**); Phologang, Philimon (**Age 14**); Majola, Michael (**Age 14**); Legodi, John (**Age 14**); Rrakgodi, Emanuel (**Age 15**); Nhlapo, Shedrick (**Age 15**); Mgadi, Jonas (**Age 14**); Malobane, Mosa (**Age 14**); Mothlank, Tunono and Isaac (twins **Aged 15**); Nkosi, Veronica (**Age 15**); Tong, Stephen (**Age 16**).

RAINBOW WARRIOR

EXPLOSION YET TO HIT FRENCH

Mitterrand has hardly moved from Gaullisme, reports CHRIS PRICE

FRENCH secret service agents, Alain Turenge and Dominique Prieur, go on trial for murder in New Zealand this autumn; the story will again be presented as an exotic mixture of spies and ecologists. But the heart of the 'Greenpeace affair' is not political control of the secret service. It is the French nuclear deterrent — the *force de frappe* — which was the brainchild of President de Gaulle and has since been accepted by all French political parties as a sacred political virility symbol.

What is less well known is that de Gaulle had always seen French Polynesia, especially after the loss of Algeria and the Sahara, as essential for France's nuclear role. In 1963 he established France's Centre for Pacific Tests at Mururoa atoll and imprisoned the territory's democratically elected member of the French Assembly, Pouvanaa a Opaa, in Paris for demanding Polynesian independence. On 28 August this year, the current leader of the independence movement in Polynesia, Charlie Ching, was sent to prison for two and a half years on various charges of riot (some of his supporters had ben found with Molotov cocktails) and on the rather grand French offence of *association de malfaiteurs*. Sixteen other *independistes* were sentenced with him. Had the *Rainbow Warrior* ever got to Tahiti, Charlie Ching and his colleagues were planning to join the ship on its voyage to Muroroa.

Both in the repression in Polynesia and in hiring an old Gaullist, Bernard Tricot, to whitewash the *Rainbow Warrior* affair, François Mitterrand is treading an established and traditional Gaullist path. Covering up for the secret services, continuing a nuclear policy and maintaining far off colonies are all part of the same web in which he is caught.

Because of the sensitivity of the issue, Mitterrand has got off lightly. So far the right-wing opposition have been co-operative over the Tricot whitewash. Giscard's response, 'My country right or wrong' is typical. Michel Poniatowski, the former Interior Minister, has also been helpful. This is partly because they instinctively defend the security services; partly to show a united front against the Anglo-Saxons, but probably mostly to defend Charles Hernu, France's Healeyesque defence minister, Mitterrand's lifelong personal and political friend and the most right-wing member of the socialist government, whose job at one time seemed in danger. As long as Hernu is there, the *force de frappe* seems safe.

Mitterrand is under attack from the Right, however, on his policy of partial Pacific decolonisation. The previous regime reluctantly allowed the New Hebrides (a British/French condominium) to become independent — though it was necessary to send first British and then Papua New Guinea troops in to prevent French *colons* — right-wing colonial settlers — declaring an independent state on Santo, one of the islands of the New Hebrides. The *colons* fled to New Caledonia — which has now become Mitterrand's Rhodesia — only worse since it has a larger blocking minority of *colon* votes. Despite this and obstruction from the Constitutional Court, he is currently pushing New Caledonia towards independence.

The Right complains that all this is leading towards Polynesia being the next domino in the decolonisation process. But even without Polynesian independence, an independent New Caledonia could make French access to their nuclear testing grounds extremely awkward. The Melanesian independence movement in New Caledonia, under Nidoish Naisseline, is an increasingly credible political force, anxious to join Australia, New Zealand and the other Pacific island states in creating a nuclear free south Pacific.

FRANCE HAS NEVER had a mass peace movement and most French politicians simply don't understand the new politics of ecology. That is why many of them see Greenpeace simplisticly — as part of an Anglo-Saxon plot against France. The clamour in Paris since the Tricot Report has been to clean up the secret services rather than the Pacific.

Others are now beginning to realise, however, that an independent French 'deterrent' may not be possible for much longer — for reasons of escalating pollution, cost and

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technology. Mururoa is now holed like a Gruyere cheese with its coral reef cracked, and there are reports that the next tests are being transferred to another 'test' atoll — Fangataufa — which no doubt soon will be in the same state as Mururoa.

There have been persistent stories of a series of quite new brain tumours among the Polynesians since 1966 when the testing started, with sufferers spirited off for VIP treatment in France and persuaded not to complain. Probably the most telling slogan of the Polynesian anti-nuclear protesters is 'Mururoa en Auvergne'. If the French really want to test their nuclear weapons, they should pollute the Massif Centrale rather than the Pacific. Yet spurred on by Star Wars and other forms of nuclear 'defence' the French are developing a 10-warhead nuclear submarine missile to replace the six warhead ones currently under construction.

Greenpeace's achievement has been more than simply to draw attention to the tests at Mururoa; the whole affair has now begun to face France with the trauma of colonial and nuclear withdrawal from East of Suez — the kind that wracked the Wilson government in the 1960s. Though the politicians don't yet talk about it openly, most know it must come soon. □

See also Feedback, p.22.

NIGERIA

ARMY USHERS IN ARMS CITY AND THE IMF

SUZANNE CRONJE on the coup against tribal politics

LAST WEEK'S military takeover in Nigeria was more than just another palace coup. It has shifted political power away from the conservative Hausa north, which is now in a small minority in the new government, to the rest of the country.

None of the major ethnic groups in Nigeria is in a position to dominate the Armed Forces Ruling Council (AFRC) which the new president, Major General Ibrahim Babangida, has set up. The members of this policy-making body now find themselves in a situation where alignments cannot easily follow tribal lines. This is practically unprecedented in Nigeria — and opens the door to the implementation of national rather than parochial policies.

Babangida himself comes from the tribally-mixed middle section of Nigeria, from Niger State. His predecessor, General Mohammed Buhari, was from Kaduna State, the powerhouse of the traditional north. Unlike Buhari, Babangida has a national cause: he sees himself as a Nigerian Ataturk and intends to develop Nigeria on the basis of a defence industry.

Babangida talks of the 'arms city' concept and draws a parallel with Brazil; Nigeria is to adopt a framework in which defence and national

Camera Press

General Babangida: a Nigerian Ataturk

planning are 'mutually inclusive and development generating', he says. the programme he suggests should occupy him for the rest of his life (he is only 43) and is conceived in three phases over 25 years.

If the great majority of Nigerians are ignorant of this plan, they should not be. The general has spoken about his grand design in public on several recent occasions. The plan has aroused some academic hostility, since at 9 per cent of the total budget Nigeria's military expenditure exceeds that of many other countries and it is not exactly in imminent danger of attack.

Other needs — health, roads, education — are thought to be more important, yet they receive a much smaller allocation. Babingida disagrees. As far as education in the 'arms city' is concerned, for instance, he argues that 'through training, those segments of the national population which are not tied to the national economy should be absorbed. The economic utilisation is guaranteed by means of specific training programmes. . .'.

Phase one — training for manpower and the initial research and development — is allocated five years. The 'arms city' would be linked with the huge Soviet-built iron and steel complex in the middle of the country, scheduled for completion in 1989. The car assembly plants and textile factories 'should be encouraged as a deliberate policy to produce defence-related goods'. The defence industry would expand employment opportunities. The technology for such development 'could be obtained by borrowing, stealing, direct purchase and licence-building'.

The pursuit of this military-industrial complex is obviously fraught with dangers, but it presupposes a modern society. In the weeks before the coup, Babangida outlined the need for a political framework which would strengthen national unity and patriotism. He also spoke of 'popular democracy'.

After the coup, he declared that the AFRC was 'determined to unite this country. We shall not allow anything to obstruct us'. Government, he admitted, needed the consent of the people to govern 'if it is to reach its objectives', and for the moment he seems to have this consent, largely because he replaces the increasingly oppressive pro-northern Buhari administration.

Significantly, student organizations and the journalists were the most enthusiastic in welcoming the coup. The new government's first act was to release political detainees who had been held without trial, and to repeal the censorship law, revealingly named, by the Buhari administration which passed it, the 'Public Officers' Protection Against False Accusation Decree'.

TO ENLIST POPULAR support, Babangida appointed some of Nigeria's more progressive officers to key positions. Notable among them is Major Abubakar Umar, who was made governor of Kaduna State. Umar is probably the first Nigerian military figure to declare openly that he supports socialism. He also says that he prefers investment in hospitals to investment in churches or mosques — not designed to gain him universal support in the strict Islamic north.

On the whole, state governors who insisted on introducing school fees in the Buhari era have lost their posts; those who fought to retain free education despite economic stringencies are still in office. Among the latter is Lieutenant-Colonel David Mark, governor of Babangida's home state, Niger, who is said to have left-wing advisers.

While the ideological picture now is confusing, the possibility of discussing Nigeria in terms of ideology is novel in itself. Babangida may be able to count on the support of most professionals, but he will have to act fast to retain it: after all, he was Buhari's Army Chief of Staff and several other prominent AFRC members formed an integral part of the Buhari administration.

The official version is that Buhari, and his number two, General Tunde Idiagbon, had been 'too rigid and uncompromising' in their attitude to issues of national significance. This is how it seemed to many uncommitted Nigerians as well. Idiagbon was largely responsible for the execution of many people found guilty of armed robbery by the special military tribunals established last year.

Some of those who faced the firing squad were undoubtedly innocent, others were minor criminals. But Nigeria is suffering from an unprecedented crime wave — a phenomenon which Babangida has described as a major threat to security. Others — Umar, for instance — describe it as symptomatic of immense income disparities, one of Babangida's 'fundamental economic problems'.

The question of whether the new government can cope with the country's creeping anarchy will decide the AFRC's fate — and that of Nigeria. Armed robbery apart, there has been fighting on a communal level, largely unreported but serious. If, as seems likely, Babangida hopes to establish his administration through the 'arms city' concept, he will require international credit.

This makes it likely that the Ministry of Finance in Lagos will be more flexible in its negotiations with the IMF than the Buhari administration allowed it to be. The international oil glut and successive corrupt governments have put Nigeria's promising economy under strain, and Western creditors have been insisting on an acceptance by Lagos of the IMF's usual deflationary package — devaluation and 'structural adjustment' of the economy.

While a settlement of this issue will be important for the new government's survival, its fate will ultimately depend on whether this vast country is prepared to accept the introduction of a corporate state. □

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LETTERS

Reece rebuked

Ian McLean, Fellow and Praelector in Politics, University College, Oxford

Everything that Peter Kellner has said (*NS* 23 August) against Reece's 'proportional loss hypothesis' is true; but there is worse to come. The thing is a logical impossibility. From 1979 to 1983 Labour lost ground. If PLH were true, Labour would have lost nine per cent of its 30,000 votes in Grimtown (= 2,700) and 9 per cent of its 10,000 votes in West Twittering (= 900) to the Tories. Now suppose that in 1987 Labour soars back to its 1979 level. The Tories are now losing ground.

Reece would have us believe that they lost nine per cent of their 30,900 votes in West Twittering (= 2,781) and nine per cent of their 12,700 votes in Grimtown (= 1,143) back to Labour. Labour would thus poll 28,443 in Grimtown and 11,881 in West Twittering. So the status quo would not be restored after all.

If PLH were true, there would be a convergence on the mean every time the direction of swing changes. There is no such convergence; therefore PLH cannot be true. I explored all this in a paper published in 1973, long before the Reece model appeared. If any *NS* reader would like a copy, I shall gladly send them one. Until recently, I believed that it had killed off the proportional swing idea. Among psephologists, it has; but it seems to lurk on in odd corners.

Middle class moves in

Jack McBane, Sheffield

In his review of Colin Ward's new book *When They Build Again*, Christian Wolmar says that housing co-ops need policing, a point never made by their advocates. Like most things in Britain, housing co-ops can be divided into north and south. In the south, particularly London, most co-ops are inhabited by middle-class professionals (teachers, social workers, *New Statesman* journalists), who use public money to get housing on the cheap. These co-ops do indeed require policing. They have given all co-ops a bad name.

In the north, however, housing co-ops are for slum clearance families who prefer this form of public housing to municipal housing. These families argue they have been badly served by Council housing, and the only way to maximise real control in the public housing sector is to form a housing co-op.

'Policing' takes the form of monitoring by the Housing Corporation every two years to ensure that the co-op is being fair and efficient in its use of public funds. If Council housing were subject to such an intensive check, most Housing Departments would have been shut down years ago.

Labour hands it to Tories

Margaret Godden, Liberal Alliance County Councillor, Oxfordshire

I cannot believe that Councillor Tony Williamson (leader of the Labour Group on this Council) said anything that justified your statement (*NS* 30 August): 'He cannot oust Tory committee chairs without Alliance support. . .'. For this implies that it was the Alliance that kept the Conservatives in the chairs on Oxfordshire County Council, while the opposite is the case.

At the Council's Annual Meeting we did our utmost to take the chairs out of the Tories' grasp. Not only did we nominate Alliance candidates for every chair; we also proposed Labour members for several of them. The Labour councillors declined to be nominated and refused to take part in the voting, allowing us to be out-voted by the Tories every time.

So on a council where power is genuinely shared, and where the policy so far has been made by negotiation between the Alliance and Labour groups, Labour has presented the Tories with all the chairs. It is a galling and ridiculous situation and we hope that our Labour colleagues will next year have the courage to defy their national directive.

Inheritance of Meek

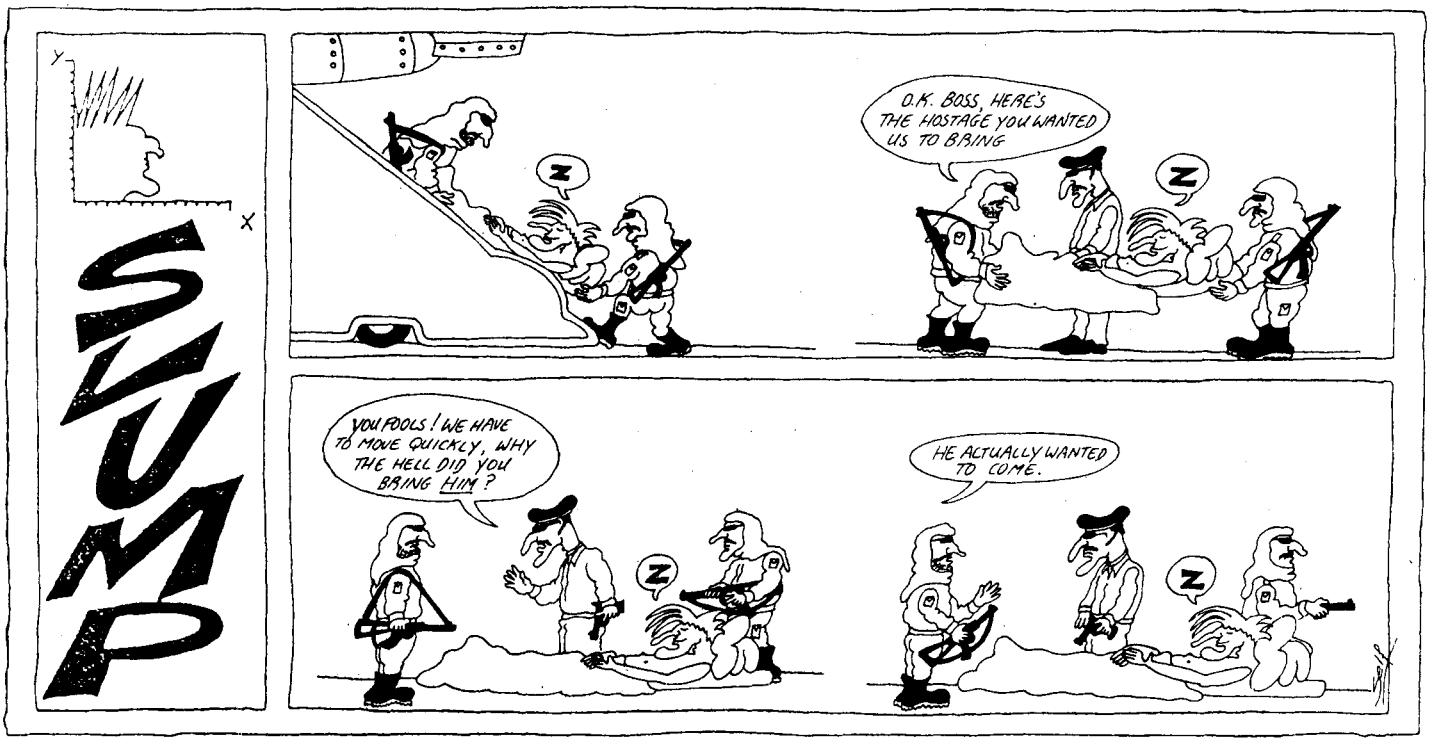
Clive Griggs & Bill Coxall, Brighton Polytechnic, Trevin Towers, Gaudick Rd, Eastbourne BN20 7SP

We are working on a biography of George Meek, a pioneer of the South Eastern Counties Federation of Socialist Societies and active member of the Clarion Fellowship prior to World War 1. In 1910 his autobiography entitled *George Meek — Bath Chair-Man* was published by Constable with an Introduction by H. G. Wells, who befriended him for many years. Meek was friendly with the Cruttendens in Hastings, who in turn knew Robert Noonan of 'Ragged Trousered Philanthropists' fame.

We wish to restore as full a picture as is possible of a working man who spent most of his life on the borders of poverty, preaching the message of socialism in an area which rarely provided fertile ground for such ideas. If anyone has any information about Meek, especially perhaps photographs of Clarion meetings in the Eastbourne and South East area of that period in which Meek does (or might) appear, would they please contact us? Any material received will be treated with great care, returned and acknowledged in our final book.

Correction

In our edition of 9 August under the heading 'Excellent Deaths' we said that Mr Stephan Kock, an adviser to the Midland Bank's Defence Equipment Finance Department, had served as political secretary to Ian Smith, Prime Minister of Rhodesia. Mr Kock was in fact political secretary to Sir Edgar Whitehead when Sir Edgar was Prime Minister of Rhodesia. We apologise to Mr Kock and the Midland Bank Group for any embarrassment caused by our error.


SUMP
O.K. BOSS, HERE'S THE HOSTAGE YOU WANTED US TO BRING
YOU FOOLS! WE HAVE TO MOVE QUICKLY, WHY THE HELL DID YOU BRING HIM?
HE ACTUALLY WANTED TO COME.

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MM means misogyny

Jane Kelly, London SE17

May I quote a sentence from Angela Carter's book *The Sadeian Woman* about Marilyn Monroe who you portrayed on your cover (*NS* 16 August):

> After *Some Like it Hot* was finished, the director, Billy Wilder, told an interviewer that it had been many weeks before he 'could look at my wife without wanting to hit her because she is a woman.'

Marilyn Monroe represents misogyny. Her image, which mocks her tragic life, is openly pornographic. It reduces women to something men put their penises into. It represents male power and female submission. Your use of her image insults your female readership, appeals to the worst side of your male readership and betrays an ignorance of feminism.

War — who's more guilty?

Cathi Allison, Epsom, Surrey

What I find most worrying in the recent media coverage of the anniversary of the dropping of two bombs killing hundreds of thousands of Japanese people, is the resurgence of 'Orientalism' in articles and TV programmes.

As if to appease our western consciences we are faced with memories of prisoners-of-war who locate their painful experiences in the existence of Japan rather than in the trans-cultural militarism adopted by Japanese officers. War widows are presented as 'disgusted' with shows of sympathy with Japanese civilians, rather than over the whole sick, misogynist system whereby men send men to kill other men (and women and children who get in the way) who are sent by other men. If the killings aren't successful or the 'honourable rules of war' broken, then bombs are dropped onto civilian populations who have little control over the political and military machines that 'broke the rules'.

We seem to have forgotten how many Vietnamese lives were lost for one American soldier's life. How many children died horribly (and as painfully as allied prisoners-of-war) for each American GI in Pearl Harbour or allied soldier who died in the far East? We should remember that war and atrocity is not the sole practice of one group of people, but that we too have guilt and no ricocheting of jingoistic hatred or nationalism will remove that.

CHANGES TO NS LISTINGS

Starting with our issue dated **13 September**, the free Listings column will disappear and a new advertisement column called ***AGENDA*** *will take its place. The rates* for **AGENDA** are extremely reasonable.

For a leaflet giving full details of how the New Statesman's AGENDA column can help organisers of groups and meetings with their publicity please contact David Jones on 01-251 5487 or write to AGENDA, New Statesman, FREEPOST, London EC1B 1EB.

FEEDBACK

Motive for murder

I WAS ASTONISHED to read Philippe Sorbier's piece (*NS* 23 August) on the Greenpeace affair. It is unfortunate to find the *NS* publishing an article which echoes the sentiments and misleading information which have abounded in the right — and extreme right-wing press in France.

Too many unclarified elements remain for any responsible journalist to be able to make the kind of clear accusations Sorbier makes against Mitterrand and his defence minister, Hernu. All one can do is, like Sherlock Holmes, ask oneself the question 'Who profits from the crime?'. There is no doubt that Mitterrand and Hernu have little to gain six months before the coming parliamentary elections by organising such a spectacular attack.

On the contrary, it is the current French government which has everything to lose, having become the victim of a massive and highly confused media campaign which has had as principal results the destabilisation of the government. What better way to poison the relations between socialist France and socialist New Zealand, particularly at a time when the latter has taken bold steps to wrench itself from the suffocating grip of American military influence in the region, and at a time when the two countries have been taking leading roles on questions such as South Africa?

It is public knowledge that certain extreme right-wing elements in the French secret services maintain close relations with their counterparts in foreign secret services, such as the South African BOSS and the CIA. Furthermore, the extreme Right, well implanted in New Caledonia, have every interest in embarrassing Mitterrand and thereby making it yet more difficult for him to achieve a peaceful solution, based on at least partial independence, for the island.

Within France the confusion, wild accusations and persistent misinformation throw a shadow of inefficiency and lack of control over the Socialists at the beginning of the final run-up to difficult elections in which the Right, unused to and outraged by opposition, is determined to regain power.

What is certain, however, is that the *Action* division of the French secret services has always had a tradition of independence and on hearing of the victory of the Socialists in 1981 all but mutinied. To claim, as Sorbier does, that under de Gaulle, Pompidou and Giscard d'Estaing the external security services had 'a sense of purpose and professional pride' and 'enjoyed the respect of its British and American counterparts' and that then after May 1981 they lost their former prestige and 'dissatisfaction rose' indicates Sorbier's strange criteria (which one would not expect to find in the *NS*).

In fact, before 1981, the *Action* division of the external services was repeatedly involved in a whole series of sordid affairs, particularly in Africa: organising coups d'état, use of mercenaries, assassinations, corruption. Before Mitterrand's victory, Georges Grillot, then head of the *Action* division, (appointed by de Marenches, who is held in such high esteem by Sorbier) visited the marine commando base at Astretto in Corsica in February 1981. An officer there at the time, quoted in a recent book*, remembers: 'He came to tell us that our service was seriously threatened. The Left would without doubt come to power. For him, this meant war. We must carry out a burned-earth policy and leave nothing behind us'. In the marine commando base at the time there were some officers with left-wing sympathies who protested to Dillais, the commander of the base, and to his second-in-command, Alain Maffart, who both rejected their protests, expressing their astonishment at such sentiments.

In May, following Mitterrand's victory, the *Action* division immediately set to work burning thousands of dossiers, technical files and the most compromising archives, particularly those dealing with political parties and trade unions, before it could fall into the hands of the Socialists. Later, at Astretto, a purge did indeed take place, but not, as Sorbier indicates, of right-wing sympathisers. Twelve out of 34 NCOs were forced to leave — those who had declared their opposition to the attitude of their commanders. The above-mentioned Alain Maffart is none other than the mysterious Alain 'Turenge' arrested in New Zealand for involvement in the *Rainbow Warrior* sinking.

When, at the same time, one knows that the French section of Greenpeace has recently been taken over, almost hijacked, by dubious elements close to the French Right who have forcibly ejected the original ex-1968 Greenpeace activists, who have since formed a new organisation, 'Robin Hood' (the same split has also occurred in Germany), that Greenpeace has gained a vast publicity coup through the affair, that Greenpeace's lawyer in its case against the French government is a former legal adviser to the Carter White House, one begins to realise that all is not clear in this murky affair.

What is certain is that extreme caution is needed before making any direct accusations and that, above all, one must avoid the easy trap of joining the chorus of anti-Mitterrand destabilisation tactics in this crucial pre-election period. One criticism which one can validly hold against François Mitterrand is that he has not adequately cleaned up his secret services.

Nicholas Bell

*(*Roger Faligot and Pascal Krop:* La Piscine, Les Services Secrets Francais *1944-84 (Editions Seuil).*

Islander is at sea

Stephen Brown, Nottingham

No one expects a Diary item (*NS* 23 August) which appears over a pseudonym to be well written, but you could at least have ensured that it made sense. William Rees-Mogg, whatever his other failings, cannot be lumped with Mr John Selwyn Gummer and the Bishop of London. He is not an Anglo-Catholic: he is something altogether more intelligible and everyday, namely a Roman Catholic Englishman. And it is at best a solecism to call him 'more royal than the crown'.

Abuse, unless it is written by really clever people, ought to be carefully checked.

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WORDS TO TEAR DOWN WALLS

'In Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, on 15 November 1975, approximately three months before arriving in Laramie, my youngest brother Robert, together with Michael Dukes and Cecil Rice had robbed a fence . . . The plan had seemed simple and foolproof. Dishonour among thieves. Except that a man was killed. Dukes blew him away . . '

The writer is JOHN EDGAR WIDEMAN, the first black American Rhodes scholar at Oxford University since 1905, subsequently university professor of English and successful novelist, whose Sent For You Yesterday *won the PEN/Faulkner award last year. His younger brother, Robby, is serving a life sentence in Pittsburgh.*

Compelled to find some meaning in the difference between their lives, to establish some connection, John wrote his book Brothers and Keepers *(from which the above quotation is taken). It is to be published in Britain on 17 October by Allison & Busby (£9.95 hb, £4.95 pb). In an article for the* New Statesman, *John Edgar Wideman describes the writing of the book.*

Three generations of black Americans: the author (back row, third from left) and his brother Robby (wearing the straw hat) with members of their family

IT'S GOOD TO BE back in England. Even though this is just a letter. Even though I don't know England any more. Twenty-two years ago I lived in Oxford for three years and haven't returned since, except once in 1976 when I discovered much to my surprise that my favorite pub, the Turf, with its dart board and pints of bitter, low catacomb ceiling and medieval pedigree, the same pub I had pelted with bicycles 20 years before in a fine, drunken undergraduate rage, my hang-out so close to New College it seemed like an adjunct, the pub which to me epitomized England and Englishness, was owned and operated by Arabs. Which is not to suggest the Turf was less pleasant or was ill-managed but to acknowledge, as I gazed around at the faces of my fellow tourists munching cucumber sandwiches and quaffing warmish ale, faces Oriental, Indian, African sprinkled

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among, perhaps even outnumbering, the paler flesh tones of Europe, that things have changed.

In 1963 I entered New College as a Rhodes Scholar, one of a pair of black scholars, the first two American Negroes to be so honoured since 1905, when the election of Alain Locke occasioned much confusion and considerable embarrassment to the Rhodes Trustees. I did not identify myself with the few other dark faces I encountered at Oxford and regret to this day my failure to do so because the young men and (a precious few) women from Africa, the West Indies, the Indian continent could have added immeasurably to my education, stimulated the growth of my underdeveloped political and cultural consciousness.

I shied from other people of colour because I'd been conditioned to believe I was one of a kind, a special case. Association with other outsiders could contaminate me. In my shadowed heart I believed such folk with their strange accents and exotic clothes, or worse, with speech habits and wardrobes which out-Englished the English, were inferior. Yet I enjoyed a hell of a good time at Oxford, blithely resisting assimilation by running with my fellow Americans and the few Brits who imitated us, playing basketball, drinking lots of Scotch and Guinness, chasing, how quaint the sound now, 'birds', gaining a patina of commonroom sophistication that would prove useful in the job market back home.

Why these confessions of a misspent youth? I suppose I'm merely attempting to come to terms with the fact that we never really learn, that nothing changes. I'm publishing *Brothers and Keepers*, a book about myself and my youngest brother who's serving a prison sentence of life with no parole. Again, the book will be a distinctly American product delivered into a situation foreign, unknown, perhaps profoundly inappropriate. The figure I'm forwarding, of book as stranger in a strange land, the parallel with my own transatlantic venture two decades ago is probably strained yet it's germane to defining this writer's sense of apprehension.

I know little of the current state of race relations in England, little of the language immigrants in their communities are forging out of the English they find spoken on the Island, nothing much of the contemporary English penal system or its treatment of minorities. *Brothers and Keepers*, consumed as it is with such matters in America, may or may not be relevant to these affairs in England. Even the language of my book, the juxtaposition and eventual merging of separate worlds, of contrasting versions of reality represented by two varieties of English — white standard written, black street oral — may be obscure to an English audience. I've struggled in my fiction and in *Brothers and Keepers* to capture the tonal precision, history, music of Black American speech. Now as my books seek a wider, international audience I wonder how translators will render the pungency, dance, the nasty insinuation and intimidation of my primal language. (What is the Swedish for 'jive muthafucker'?)

'(It) is not a book about a good guy and a bad seed, about one brother's success and another's failure, it is testimony, a rediscovery of kinship, of affinities, of the bonds that transcend those measures by which the world reckons success and failure'

Thinking about what translates, what is portable from culture to culture, language to language, gives rise to writerly anxieties. One asks the large questions. Is there a core of ideas, characters, themes in a narrative which might make it worthwhile for anyone, other than the author's family and friends, to bother with?

Brothers and Keepers is a digression. I'm a novelist, a fiction writer. Though I had published articles, reviews, scholarly discussions of Afro-American literature, I had never attempted a book length piece of non-fiction and have no intention of essaying the genre again. My motivation for writing *Brothers and Keepers* was occasional, pragmatic. The frustration of knowing, day in and day out, that someone you love, someone very much like you is locked away, doomed to live in an abominably shabby, dangerous and destructive environment is unutterable. I'm not a lawyer or a politician. I own nothing I can barter or sell for his freedom so what could I do to accomplish my brother's release? Some days this question was muted, a vague current of unease below the surface of things. Other days the question trapped me, I never quite escaped its presence. The notion of a book as a crusade, a weapon insinuated itself. Could the art I practise dynamite the prison walls? If Leadbelly could sing his way out of the penitentiary, maybe I could write my brother out.

This romantic notion served well enough for an impetus. My friend and business associate Andrew Wylie precipitated the actual writing of the book. 'Every time we get together,' he commented, 'we wind up talking about him.' Andrew was saying what I'd been thinking so his words had a peculiar force. His prompting accomplished the next step in an inner dialogue, a long conversation I'd been having with myself that had been stalled and needed a nudge forward. Past the fear that even if I could and did make a book from my brother's troubles, it might not alter his situation one bit. And what would that mean? If I took his story and my telling didn't save him but advanced my career, would I be guilty of exploiting his misery? If I took my best shot and failed, was my brother lost forever behind bars? Was I being hopelessly naive or arrogant or both to put my writing self forward as his saviour? Was I a coward if I didn't?

Think of a long narrow room crowded with benches and chairs along the walls, down the center, and the weight of 20 or 30 simultaneous conversations in this cramped oblong space, impossible conversations trying to make up for lost years and lost moments, words skating over the thin ice of topics and prospects which could fill a lifetime but must be reduced to perfunctory exchanges in the boisterous atmosphere of a stock exchange. You shout what should be whispered, whisper what you need to shout. Nothing is easy in the visiting lounge of SCIP, the State Correction Institute at Pittsburgh, and that turns out to be the easiest truth of the prison.

Tape recorders are forbidden in the lounge and since I didn't wish to alert prison officials about my intentions and absolutely refused to be compromised by asking their co-operation, I decided primarily on memory for reconstructing what we said. This method — if instinctive recoil from bargaining with my brother's enemies, and my gut reaction against interviewing my own flesh and blood the way I might interview a rock star or famous athlete, can be deemed a method — resulted in advantages I hadn't anticipated. Habits I had evolved as fiction writer surfaced. I listened to my brother, Robby, then later, alone, sometimes three or four weeks later, I would browse through my skeletal notes (dates, times, names, outline sequences of events) and try to reproduce the texture, the context, the meaning of what we had exchanged.

That's a very different operation from recording a tape and filling in stage directions and descriptive passages around the core of what the tape's transcribed. I was working as novelist, granting myself the flexibility, the fluidity, the play of fictional technique. My responsibility as I

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conceived it was to create the core. What was actually said did not determine the shape of my writing; the task of my writing was to discover then to render the substance (truth, meaning) of what had been said.

Gradually the project of writing about my brother lost the headiness of a crusade. I could not ask Robby to share his story without telling him what had been happening to me over the ten years years we had lost touch with each other. Our stories became entwined and the book changed scope, purpose. My history, family history were implicated. Also there was the predictable drudgery of writing. Each sentence set down, each scene selected is a surrender of other sentences, other scenes, an acknowlegment that out of all those glorious possibilities alive in one's imagination, this is the best one can do, these poor, severed, actual words on the page. A writer faces graphic, literal evidence of his or her limitations each working moment. The more I wrote the clearer it became: with luck and persistence I might produce a manuscript, but surely it would not be, nor would it occasion a miracle.

I read everything I could about prisons — histories, autobiographies of prisoners, prison novels, memoirs, philosophic essays, sociology, criminology and discovered I could endlessly squander energy required for writing and still not come close to being an 'expert in the field'. I didn't need books to tell me the climate in my country was all wrong for what I was attempting.

IN 1981 WHEN I began *Brothers and Keepers* there was precious little in the air to suggest that America might be prepared to extend compassion or mercy to its enormous prison population. With the rise of so called neo-conservative thinking which blamed the poor for poverty and conceived of crime as an evil perpetrated by a criminal class, society's priorities were unambiguous: broader police powers, construction of more prisons, formulation of victims' rights, longer prison sentences.

My brother's sole hope of release was and is to have his life sentence commuted so that he will become eligible for parole. Power to commute his prison sentence is vested in the Govenor of Pennsylvania and a Board of Pardons and Paroles the govenor appoints. Thus commutation is in many senses a political process. In the face of prevailing national priorities, symbolized by the Reagan administration's hard line towards the destitute, the delinquent, the dispossessed, I despaired and continue to be pessimistic about my brother's chances of receiving a fair hearing. Yet I remain committed to securing his freedom and one bright morning soon I believe he will be free.

If a book couldn't knock down the walls, at least it drew me though them on a regular basis. With the book as our ostensible business in those two hour meetings permitted by prison regulations, my brother and I began to reconnect, catch up after ten years of relative estrangement. My wife and children accompanied me as often as possible (we lived two thousand miles from Pittsburgh but spent time in the city every year) and those gatherings were feasts, holidays, rituals or renewal. We hugged, talked, reminded each other that we held a place open, waiting for my brother outside the walls. That such a place exists is a fact prisons function to eradicate. A good prisoner is one who accepts the status assigned by his keepers. Accepting that status (identity) means the prisoner has acquiesced, has begun to participate in the definition of himself as a species different, less worthy than inhabitants of the free world.

'The notion of a book as a crusade, a weapon, insinuated itself. Could the art I practise dynamite the prison walls? If Leadbelly could sing his way out of the penitentiary, maybe I could write my brother out'

In order to survive even partially intact a prisoner must see himself as part of a world larger than the bounds of the prison, he must cling to a sense of self which contradicts the definition of inmate burned into his consciousness by brutal prison routines. Psychological maiming cuts deeper than the cat-o'-nine-tails which classic prison reform sought to eliminate. The book became for my brother a focus, a practical, concrete means of staying in touch, not only with me, but himself. Telling his story, making a book was a way of anchoring himself in an alternative reality. His honesty and generosity made the project possible. His voice, insights, his memories and dreams provide much of the narrative's substance. His keen critiques of the text were crucial at various points of the manuscript's evolution. Visits, letters, a job in the prison hospital, classes, the idea of a book were threads Robby stitched together, fragments he shored against ruin.

SO NOW THE book has been published and soon will be published again in England. Any sense of rejoicing, of achievement is muted by the fact Robby remains in prison. *Brothers and Keepers* worked no magic in terms of his release. Yet it did establish an identity for him in a realm outside the prison walls. Strangers write to him, encourage him, offer assistance, recognize his talents, seek his advice, see a mirror of their troubles in his, proffer their prayers. The national media — Sixty Minutes, CBS News, Good Morning America, *People* magazine — have publicized his face, his voice. He's had a moment of fame; become a minor celebrity in the prison. Ironically, this positive exposure of his plight, his worthiness to be free, also made him a marked man. How prison staff handle their inevitable jealousy and resentment of a 'special' inmate, how Robby's fellow inmates answer their questions — what's all this stuff mean, will what's happening hurt us or help us, is he, finally, still one of us? — will literally determine my brother's safety in the prison environment.

Brothers and Keepers is a personal essay, an attempt to talk to my brother about what matters to us both, the possibility of a decent life, the impossibility of that decency when one's life is unconnected with other lives. I began by suggesting parallels between the book's publication and my arrival in England 20 years ago. While I was busy being a Yank at Oxford, certain subtle changes occurred in spite of my resistance. I was infected by the spirit of the place, this country's visible and invisible history. The effects are with me still. When I reached out to help my brother by writing a book, much more was at stake than I anticipated. My life, my sense of self was profoundly altered by the experience. Robby taught me and teaches me. His courage, his ability to be productive, to value himself in spite of his dire circumstances have set standards I can only hope to emulate. *Brothers and Keepers* is not a book about a good guy and a bad seed, about one brother's success and another's failure, it is testimony, a rediscovery of kinship, of affinities, of the bonds that transcend those measures by which the world reckons success and failure.

Among the Yoruba of West Africa, twins project a sacred truth about all human beings. Twins suggest unity, ideal completion, the unbroken circle of spirit and flesh made manifest. Twins are visible reminders of man's dual nature, and if one dies the survivor is obligated to wear an image of the departed all the days of his life. This custom points to the divine symmetry of all things, reifies mutual obligation and dependence. The brother we keep alive inside us is the brother who keeps us alive. □

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To sing the burden of history

Nicholas Murray

Celtic Revivals: Essays in Modern Irish Literature 1800-1980
SEAMUS DEANE *Faber* £15

SEAMUS DEANE WRITES a criticism in which the mutual dependency of literature and politics is axiomatic. Any other way of approaching modern Irish writing would be preposterous. Like his fellow Ulster poet and critic, Tom Paulin, Deane's sympathies are nationalist — for which the book has already been conorcruised in the *Observer* — although Deane wields an altogether more peaceable pen than the increasingly irascible Paulin.

These essays show how 'the enforced intimacy between literature and politics was unique and tragic in Ireland' and what gives them a satisfying consistency is the recurrence of this central theme: the ways in which history has been mythologised and, in return, the creative imagination forced to confront politics in Ireland — from Yeats to Seamus Heaney.

Unsurprisingly, the critical landscape is dominated by the twin peaks of Yeats and Joyce who take up a third of the essays here. Yeats, with his overriding vision of the hero as artist, hitched his wagon to the Protestant Ascendency, believing that the spiritual nobility he sought was to be found 'among a rich man's flowering lawns'. Burke (characterised by Deane as 'the greatest of all Irish political theorists') did not share Yeats's romanticisation of aristocrat and peasant, locked in a primitive symbiosis of pure energy denied to the middle classes fumbling in their greasy tills. For Burke the Ascendency represented 'an insulting and vexatious superiority'. Yeats's imaginative project was doomed, argues Deane, because 'the glamorisation of the Celt and of the Ascendency was an attempt to reconcile at the level of myth what could not be reconciled at the level of politics'.

In the first essay on Joyce, Deane argues that the *Portrait* and *Ulysses* were the first novels in the English language 'in which the activity of thought is the central concern and the determining influence on the form'. Their heroes were not represented in the traditional manner as marginalised intellectuals at the edge of bourgeois society, rather their thinking enveloped, possessed and constituted the fictions. This further entailed a rupture with the traditional English novel which centred on family life. It is no accident that *Ulysses* 'has the parodied family as its central metaphor'. In one of the best essays in the book, on 'Joyce and Nationalism', Deane challenges the view that Joyce retreated from politics into a narrow, self-sufficient aesthetic world. On the contrary, 'his fiction was creating a reality which would otherwise have no existence'. That reality was addressed to, was part of, the political world and, in creating it, Joyce 'discovered the fictive nature of politics' and, in his writings, meditated continuously on the nature of the fictive. This gave his writing a greater political maturity than that of Yeats.

These essays are hard on those who deal less completely with 'the inescapable category' of history. Synge's attempts to rescue the unsullied language of rural Ireland as 'an *elixir vitae* for a decadent civilisation' — Deane is not at heart an enthusiast for the Celtic twilight — were doomed from the start and left him with only a 'collector's melancholy'. O'Casey, a writer who pushed politics to the forefront of his work, lacks, in Deane's account, the masterful subtlety of Joyce and others, particularly when he appeared to set up a simplistic opposition between politics and essential humanity. There's a literalism about O'Casey's thought and language that Deane doesn't like and which makes him judge Yeats 'a more profoundly political dramatist'.

In the essay on Thomas Kinsella, Deane highlights a concern of much contemporary Irish poetry: 'The need to break, however reluctantly, out of a deep insulation from the actual, and to take on again the burden of history and thereby to come to a recognition of horror and violence, the imposition of such forces upon an isolated, peripheral consciousness'. An added attraction of this subject matter — apart from the fact that contemporary Belfast is a more potent reality than donkey races on a Galway beach — is that it provides 'an exit from provincialism'.

The key word here is 'reluctantly', as the imagination warily engages with what must concern it but which could diminish it if commitment were to become narrowly programmatic or reductive — setting a party line to music. Contemporary writers who exhibit this include Derek Mahon, whose elegance and urbanity have been forced gradually into proximity with history, or Seamus Heaney, whose work has increasingly moved from its early rural sensuousness to a growing maturity of perception about contemporary Ireland and a pained and tentative exploration of the violence in the North — a poetic drama whose serial enactment we are still witnessing.

Seamus Deane writes in one essay of 'the capacity of language to systematise anything it chooses to include', a phrase which sums up much of the book's worrying at the modifications wrought by art on experience and vice versa. If the professor in Deane sometimes leans towards prolixity or over-elaboration he can equally write with an elegant concision ('Yeats began his career by inventing an Ireland amenable to his imagination. He ended by finding an Ireland recalcitrant to it.') This is criticism of a very high order, cool, learned, illuminating, engaged, and sure in its sense of the important meanings in modern Irish writing. □

A mutilated measure

Frank Cooper

Halfway through
(Approximately)
A rather snappy bossa nova
Rose broke her ankle

She made it to a
Convenient chair
And savagely snapped the
Inconvenient bones back
Into place

Fortunately we had lost only
(Approximately)
Ten and a half beats
Of Latin American
So the evening was not
Entirely ruined

It's the real thing

David Montrose

The Fruit Palace
CHARLES NICHOLL *Heinemann* £9.95

A CURIOUSLY self-denigrating specimen of investigative reportage, *The Fruit Palace*. At the very outset, Charles Nicholl emphasises that he is no white knight impelled by moral purpose; on the contrary, his motives for writing the book were unambiguously sordid. A publisher dangled a fat commission — to uncover 'The who, the how and the why of Colombian cocaine smuggling' — and, despite considerable misgivings, he took the lure. These misgivings had not abated by the time he reached Bogotá:

> Had I really come all this way to write a story about cocaine? Not the plight of the Indians, the politics of underdevelopment, the ruination of the forests, or a dozen other worthy topics, but cocaine. Greed and folly in a handful of snow. A cheap, one-eyed glimpse up the skirts of South America.

Despite this, while Nicholl concentrates, of necessity, on the 'Colombia of *mala fama*, bad name' rather than that which is 'sane and healthy' in the country, no exhibition of muck-raking sensationalism materialises. Rather the reverse: even if it is not quite the thoroughgoing survey originally sought, the book largely proves an estimable piece of fact-finding. Guided by the hard-won local expertise of drug-raddled expatriate Gus McGregor, Nicholl encounters the retired 'mule', Rosalita, veteran of 43 runs through US customs, and Mario, once a prominent 'chemist'. What's more, McGregor provides a hot lead concerning 'Snow White', a new gang trafficking big

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Cliff Harper

quantities of unusually pure merchandise, probably to Europe.

Scenting the Great Cocaine Story, Nicholl sets about conducting discreet enquiries. He meets with early success: an informant fills him in on the first stage of the pipeline, which ends in a slaughterhouse outside Bogotá. Attempts to learn more, though, result only in a narrow escape from a heavy *contrabandista* followed by a wild-goose chase through jungle backwaters. After drawing this eventful blank, Nicholl decides to settle for a smaller story. Abandoning the quest for 'Snow White', he penetrates the cocaine underworld by posing as a prospective bulk-buyer — and promptly stumbles on the remainder of the pipeline. Unfortunately, before he can decamp, having seen enough, his cover is blown. The gang's retribution — distinctly lenient by prevailing standards — takes the form of temporary impressment. Black farce ensues as Nicholl, charged with making a delivery on board a Swedish ship, finds himself wandering the dockside with a leaking briefcase. After this experience, he wisely calls a halt. He has his story, and it is a worthily informative and highly readable one.

Nevertheless, Nicholl still insists throughout that he is engaged upon a sleazy enterprise, a lurid stunt rather than a legitimate investigation. Above all, he despises the subterfuges he has to practise — though, with one exception, they seem entirely warrantable — several times describing himself as a liar or a cheat. Possibly Nicholl's attitude towards the assignment has been coloured by his inability to resist the dangerous temptations it threw up. Inside reporting on the cocaine racket unavoidably entails at least some involvement with the drug itself: the traditional 'I made an excuse and left' approach simply would not work. Nicholl's involvement, though, proves way beyond the call of duty. Occasionally, indeed, he appears completely unable to keep other people's business out of his nose. The mornings after invariably feature much self-reproach. Revealingly, moderation and contentment are attained only when he takes a mid-story holiday and when, job done, he visits the Indian territories in the mountains.

Nicholl's regular falls from grace are hardly admirable, but they diminish the reader's sympathies far less than his stubborn disparagement of the whole project. A reviewer rating a book higher than its author does? Whatever next? □

Bug

John Rentoul

A Job to Live: The Impact of Tomorrow's Technology on Work and Society
SHIRLEY WILLIAMS *Penguin* £2.95

NEVER IN the history of politics or publishing has so much rubbish been written about something so important, doing such a disservice to so many. You might expect the *New Statesman* to be hostile; but, honestly, I have impeccable right-wing credentials. I like Peter Kellner. I'm a known supporter of Peter Shore. And Shirley Williams's book is still ridiculously bad.

She goes on about new technology, so I assume the book was written on a computer. It certainly looks as though it were. Paragraphs follow each other with all the flow and logic of Labour Party conference resolutions. Even the bizarre title must have been thrown up while Williams was playing with the 'randomize' function (after the computer had been told not to use 'unemployment' in the title).

The acknowledgements allege that five people, including some who should know better, 'read the book all through'. They should consult their lawyers as this is probably actionable. I will break with reviewing practice and admit — no, no, boast — that I couldn't read it all. I did read the introduction, which was riddled with some very entertaining non sequiturs (when Williams's so-called fifth-generation computer arrives, it might be able to check that the argument in one sentence follows that of the previous one). Take this: 'It is the essence of democracy that the people are consulted through the representatives they elect. No one elects a computer.' Er, yes. But Shirley, no one elects the BBC, the newspaper proprietors, Douglas Hurd (as Home Secretary), Ian MacGregor, ICI chief John Harvey-Jones. Or Clive Sinclair. Computers will only be an extension of their existing power.

What is completely absent from this book (all right, I did skim through *most* of the turgid prose) is any sense that there are powerful non-democratic forces in society. Some people might call them capitalist forces for the sake of simplicity. They have created the conditions in which new technology develops and, thus, it is no surprise that new technology destroys jobs and weakens organised labour. Williams claims: 'New technologies do destroy jobs, but they create others' and refers us to the chapter 'Jobs for the Future'. That chapter contains no

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evidence that any substantial number of jobs will be created by new technology, although it does mention that 'there will be many jobs in the servicing and maintaining of home computer systems'.

Don't buy this book. □

In a mind field

David Berry

Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire
HANS EYSENCK *Viking* £12.95

HANS EYSENCK IS clever but not that bright. He'd do well in one of those intelligence tests set out in *Know your Own IQ*. But he can never quite manage to cope with complicated ideas or systems of thought. He is, however, the best known psychologist in Britain, author of over 35 books and present occupant of the prestigious chair of psychology at the Institute of Psychiatry.

The psychology that Professor Eysenck practises and praises, which can roughly be described as behaviourist, is quite useful for a limited number of patients and has some wider applications in understanding some aspects of mental functioning. Indeed one or two behavioural techniques can be incorporated, with profit, in other therapeutic methods. And it's a pity that English psychiatrists are so patronising to behavioural psychologists although rarely to their face.

The Decline and Fall of the Freudian Empire is the kind of book no English psychiatrist would have in the consulting room but can be safely quoted at a dinner party: 'Well, you know the trouble about Freud is that he wasn't really a scientist, cooked up all his evidence, set back serious psychological work for 50 years, couldn't even cure his patients. Wasn't even original. Yes, he was a great... er... philosopher but no use to a medical man like me.'

That's basically what Professor Eysenck is saying, although he can't resist explanations of the success of Freudian thought which owe more to *Reader's Digest* than the sociology of knowledge.

Eysenck accuses Freud of plagiarism, claiming that he didn't even have the merit of originality, a strange use of the word since in Eysenck's formulation it could equally have been said of Marx, Darwin and Newton. Eysenck's own book isn't in the least original.

The two points on which I found myself in agreement with the Professor — that classical psychoanalysis is of little use to people suffering from severe mental illness and that it's never been proved that psychoanalysis gets rid of neurotic symptoms — have been said many times before.

Where Eysenck goes wrong is that he doesn't distinguish between psychoanalysis, psychoanalytically-oriented therapy and psychoanalytically-influenced mental health practice.

It is not true, for example, that clinical tests have proved irrefutably that psychotherapy is less effective than behavioural techniques or drugs. As one of Eysenck's more cynical psychiatrist colleagues could have told him, clinical testing in psychiatry is in a mess and can prove roughly what you want it to apart from its undoubted specific benefits in comparing drugs.

It is not true that psychoanalysis dominated British psychiatry in the 1940s and 1950s. The availability of psychoanalysis and psychiatry, multi-disciplinary community mental health, to name just a few, its influence

Neither is it true that the influence of psychoanalysis is now waning in the UK to be replaced by behavioural psychology. In the fields of family therapy, group work, child psychiatry, multi-disciplinary community mental health, to name just a few, its influence is, if anything, increasing. Why is it that so many clinical psychologists, after three years of behavioural training, go on to do analytic training? Maybe it's because they haven't read Eysenck's work — or maybe it's because they have.

At the heart of Eysenck's confusion is the naive view that scientists work in a vacuum testing out their theories with supposed objectivity and empirical experiment. Theories of science have moved on a little from this.

It doesn't in fact matter that much if Freud invented cases that proved his theory or constructed a myth to keep his theories intact. The point is that Freud developed a theory of mind and of the subject rich enough to dominate the human and social sciences this century. And introduced concepts such as 'regression', 'transference' and 'dependency' that mental health workers feel describe their perceptions of what is happening with people they see in mental distress.

For Professor Eysenck to write this off in 200 pages of ill-considered, illogical banality reminds me of those Oxford philosophers in the 1960s who wrote off Hegel or Sartre in snappy little monographs.

Their introductions, like Eysenck's, always gave them away for they laid down patronising rules for the reader to remember in case the reader might get seduced by the texts discussed. And they also confessed bemusement as to why those philosophers should be so popular. But the impression created by all this was pure envy, like that of Eysenck towards Freud. □

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Among this week's contributors:

Colin Greenland's most recent novel is *Daybreak on a Different Mountain* (Allen and Unwin). He is one of the editors of *Interzone*.

Alan Bold is the editor of *W. H. Auden: The Far Interior*, published by Vision this July.

Not turn aside

Anne Smith

The Tamarisk Tree (Vol. 3): Challenge to the Cold War
DORA RUSSELL *Virago* £12.95 & £5.95

THIS VOLUME of Dora Russell's continuing autobiography might equally well have been called 'The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Idealist', for a life devoted to the cause of humanity, she demonstrates, is the saddest of all possible lives. In 1957 she wrote to a friend, 'I feel terribly lonely... For 37 years now I have spent a great deal of my time trying to build a bridge between communist countries and the west and the wreckers win every time.' After all, in the end, her message is the old familiar one which no one seems to care to believe: 'Only by learning to love one another can our world be saved.'

Yes, but how do we do that? The question, though unanswerable, is relevant in the light of Russell's incidental remarks, such as this in 1947: 'While doing what I could for the family, my real concern was for the political situation in Europe.' There was much that was tragic in her family life: her cricketing son, a political activist who refused to join the army because of its nuclear capacity and thought to serve his country otherwise by working down the mines, was paralysed in an accident there; her elder son was diagnosed as a schizophrenic and lived in total dependence on her; a grand-daughter committed suicide in the Far East by setting herself alight in a protest...

Dora Russell herself was constantly and deeply involved in the struggles for world peace and female equality, and in the anti-nuclear movement. There is so much to do; so few willing to do it. Those who try are heroic, for they have to live without the consolations of success in their public or personal lives. Yet if you have Dora Russell's conscience, you really have no alternative. She writes:

> Very many times I have tried to get myself free in thought and action to pursue other less demanding and harrowing occupations, but there was always some human problem, need, injustice from which in conscience, one could not turn aside.

The easy way to regard this book would be to take it as an historical record of the under-(dark) side of the progress British society and world politics are said to have made since the last war — to note (as of course one does, for it's vitally relevant) what Dora Russell reveals about censorship and propaganda in the BBC and British political institutions; to absorb what she has to say about the need for women to come forward and change the face of politics; to consider her critique of the philosophy of the Welfare State; to discuss her theories of love and sex and to heed her prophecies. But through and beyond these temporal considerations comes the honest story of one highly intelligent, compassionate woman, who has committed her whole life to making the world a better place. It is deeply moving, and desperately sad. □

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Shorter reviews

The Haymarket Tragedy
PAUL AVRICH *Princeton* £21.20

The Haymarket affair is one of the most dramatic episodes in the history of the American Labour movement, starting in 1886 with an attempt to impose the eight-hour day by mass direct action. On 1 May a wave of strikes and demonstrations began, especially in Chicago, where the leading English-speaking and German-speaking sections of the movement were dominated by militant anarchists. On 3 May police fired into a crowd of strikers, killing at least two and wounding many more. On 4 May a peaceful demonstration near the Haymarket was attacked by police; a dynamite bomb was thrown at the police, who again opened fire. Seven policemen were killed and many wounded (mostly by their bullets) and civilian casualties were about the same.

The immediate result was the first American Red Scare. Hundreds of people were arrested, mostly anarchists and/or foreigners. Ten anarchists were indicted, all but two Germans; eight were tried and, although there was no evidence to link any of them (or anyone else) with the bomb, one was imprisoned and seven sentenced to death. After the failure of appeals, two were reprieved, one killed himself in prison and four were hanged on 11 November 1887. Opinion soon turned in favour of the 'Haymarket Martyrs' and in 1893 they were pardoned, their trial condemned and three survivors released. The later result was the adoption by the international Labour movement of 1 May as an annual celebration and by the international anarchist movement of 11 November as an annual commemoration.

Paul Avrich is an American historian who has specialised first in Russian and then in American anarchism and *The Haymarket Tragedy* is the third of a series of biographical studies of the latter. He concentrates on the lives of the protagonists, especially the American Albert Parsons and the German August Spies, and demonstrates that the Chicago anarchists were men and women to be taken seriously. But he also provides a detailed account of the whole background and his very scholarly book supersedes the only previous full-length study — Henry David's *History of the Haymarket Affair* (1936) — a couple of years before the centenary. The book is well written and produced, but dreadfully expensive. What is needed now is a similar study of the similar case of Sacco and Vanzetti half-a-century later.

Nicolas Walter

Confessions of a Failed Southern Lady
FLORENCE KING *Michael Joseph* £8.95

Following the fortunes of Florence King is like blithely wading into the sea and finding it full of jellyfish. She recounts them in a stingy, bittersweet book with all the exuberance of a Restoration Comedy and big, generous characters to match.

Confessions has none of the uncomfortable introspection or self-aggrandisement of too much modern autobiographical writing, yet it is never superficial. It is a genuinely comic portrayal of a girl whose granny wants her to be a Southern Belle, white gloves *et al* ('There's something unrefined about a reading woman; they always reek of the lamp'), and whose baseball-crazed mother would have preferred a boy. Florence fights both of them, takes herself to college, determined to find a lover and to major in French. She discovers that sex in the 1950s is a seesaw between avoiding the clitoral orgasm and playing with his 'you know' if you're going steady. Worse, any academic ambition must come second to marital studies. Eventually, she gets her grades and a diaphragm.

Stylistically the book employs a winning combination of the best in soap opera melodrama and the hot-timing, ding-dong dialogue usually found in Abbot and Costello movies. All this plus a sense of syntax strong enough to make Dr Johnson look like a beginner. It's a pleasure to be so manipulated by a woman who writes so well, especially when comic writing is usually the preserve of men. I've never read so many perfect one-liners ('Like charity, schizophrenia begins at home') and it's a long time since I've laughed out loud through nearly 300 pages.

Like all true comedy, *Confessions* has its savage and tragic times, but morbidity is not allowed. At the last moment, when your eyes are brimming with tears, Ms King skilfully tosses a banana skin and skids her readers back into the fairground. No one could fail to sympathise with this gutsy heroine about to lose her lover and her grant, but when she starts an emergency career as a short-story writer, her first entitled 'I Committed Adultery in a Diabetic Coma', it's popcorn in the stalls again.

This book is dynamite, don't miss it.

Jeanette Winterson

A Traveller in Romance: Uncollected Writings 1901-1964
W. SOMERSET MAUGHAM *Anthony Blond* £12.95

Introducing his edition of 66 previously uncollected bits and pieces by Somerset Maugham, John Whitehead calls the collection a 'rag-bag of...miscellaneous writings' but also a 'rich harvest of minor work'. It is, indeed, a richly revealing book comprising the Second Best of Somerset Maugham.

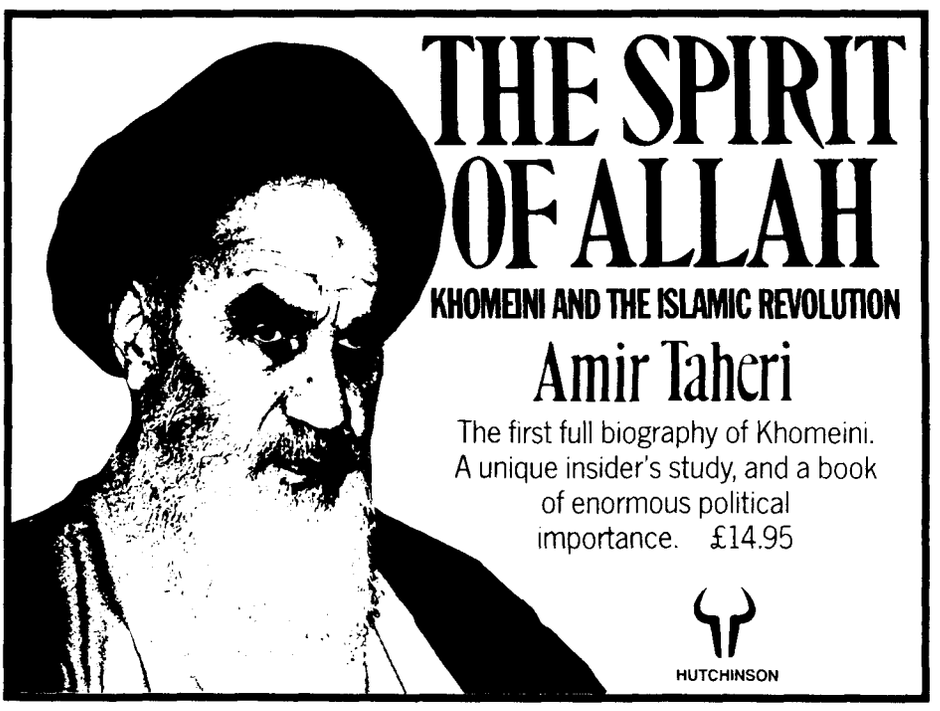
There are dramatic sketches in it, opinions on other authors, articles on painting, patriotic reflections on the Second World War, accounts of various visits and four short stories. The theme that unites Maugham's occasional prose is stated during an address given in New York in 1950: 'My conclusion is that there is no such thing as a mere story teller.'

As his greatest work shows, Maugham developed a distinctive style by bringing a moralistic tone to the expansion of anecdotes. He liked to claim he was a hedonist with little sense of social responsibility but his art always involves moral issues. Vitality, for Maugham, is the greatest virtue and the dull are invariably condemned to some kind of hell. In a short essay on 'The Culture That Is To Come' (from *Redbook* of August 1941) he affirms his faith in the ethical integrity of art: 'The end of culture is right living. The final test of a work of art is its moral value. Our culture is a statement in the terms of art of our ideals.'

Appropriately, then, a sense of indignation informs 'The Making of a Millionaire' (published in *Lady's Realm*, July 1906), one of the short stories rescued from obscurity by John Whitehead. It concerns an unscrupulous financier whose wife threatens to leave him when she learns he has floated a worthless goldmine on the Stock Exchange. Abruptly, the financier changes his ways, regains the admiration of his wife and impresses fellow speculators by buying back the supposedly dud shares at par. At the end of the story, Maugham shares with the reader the financier's discovery that 'In the mine which he himself had all along thought was quite worthless, gold had been found, gold in incredible quantities.' Finally, the financier is triumphant: 'He laughed till the tears ran down his cheeks.' So much for the morality of the money market.

Maugham is at his most attractive when indulging his enthusiasms — 'there is no one now writing who has more obviously a gift for the theatre than Mr Noel Coward,' he writes in 1929 while, in an appreciation of Dorothy Parker (in 1944), he approves of her ability to 'make a fool immortal with a jibe'. There are, inevitably, displays of petulance and world-weariness. 'I am sick of this way of life,' he comments, understandably enough, at the age of 90. For the student of Maugham this is an indispensable collection; to the general reader it gives, in one volume, a good impression of Maugham's range as a writer.

Alan Bold



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FICTION

Mists of time

Colin Greenland

You've Never Heard Me Sing: Selected Short Stories 1968-1983
TED WALKER *Heinemann* £9.95
Tongues of Flame
TIM PARKS *Heinemann* £8.95
Gentlemen in England: A Vision
A.N. WILSON *Hamish Hamilton* £9.95
The Big Man
WILLIAM MCILVANNEY *Hodder* £8.95
Family and Friends
ANITA BROOKNER *Cape* £8.95
'D' Train
TERRY WILSON *Grapheme* £9.95

METHODICALLY, thoughtfully, Ted Walker digs over his childhood in wartime Sussex: fishing the codling run; dressing up on Bonfire Night; combing the downs for fragments of Messerschmitt. He remembers his father's unemployment, his mother's puerperal fever. Each story in **You've Never Heard Me Sing** is a cluster of recollections around some minor incident or familiar encounter thus preserved from time's rapacity. Walker makes sure to tell us which things actually happened to him, which were told to him and which are only 'made up'. A habitual touch of bitterness prevents these mellow ruminations from subsiding entirely into torpid melancholia. Better known here as a poet, Walker sold 17 of these 21 stories to the *New Yorker*. Prime British nostalgia is a reliable transatlantic export.

Tim Parks's first novel falls unfortunately into the slender gap between nostalgia and contemporaneity. Documenting the advent of Charismatic Baptism from Arkansas in a genteel Surrey parish of the Sixties, **Tongues of Flame** is well accomplished but rather too dour to offer much in the way of period atmosphere. Which merely prompts the question: why set a book about righteous, vindictive religion and the repression of teenage sexuality in the dim old Sixties, when those forces are even more prevalent, in very different forms, today?

A.N. Wilson's nostalgia is so thorough it amounts to a rejection of the present; yet **Gentlemen in England** is his first wholly historical novel. Set in the summer of 1880 and encrusted with commemorative detail — George Eliot's marriage, Charles Bradlaugh's refusal to take his parliamentary oath — it relates a tumult in the bosom of a respectable family from St John's Wood. The principles in conflict are as improbably typical as those on which a contemporary cartoonist might have capitalised: the sour paterfamilias, professor of vulcanology and atheistical prophet of Science, is smitten to his fossilised old heart when his unsuitable and much younger wife falls in love with a hack portrait painter (representing Art) who, instead, lusts after their bright but foolish daughter (spirit of Youth), while their undergraduate son is fervent in his conversion to an eccentric and visionary Religion.

As usual with Wilson, the comic and serious aspects of the upheaval are thickly mixed in a singularly inconsequential plot, which trundles along to an unsatisfactory halt at the edge of the known world, on Dover beach. Wholly indicative of the spirit of *Gentlemen in England* is that its two most attractive characters are a couple of old men who spend the entire book reminiscing about 'the era thirty or forty years before the commencement of this chronicle'. Nostalgia upon nostalgia.

For Dan Scoular, **The Big Man** of William McIlvanney's title, the past is no key to the uncouth present. Dan, an innocent hunk, is offered reprieve from the rot of recession and pit closures when a Glasgow hood, a 'big man' of another kind, signs him up for an illegal bare-knuckle fight. On top of his tiny plot McIlvanney rears a great ziggurat of existential cerebration: 'He wakened into a block of structured sunlight, no casual place but one imprisoning him in an experience he must confront. The unfamiliar room told him his loneliness' and so on. Dan's ordeal is less a macho trial than an odyssey of moral and political awakening. McIlvanney's ponderous commentary yearns towards abstraction but is kept anchored, just about, by his vivid sense of personality and the deep conjunctions between feelings and behaviour.

Back to the Thirties. The Dorns, 'the unpromising debris of a European family', are comfortable in their English exile. Sophie's husband, a successful industrialist, 'is absent, gone before, dead, mildly disgraced', leaving her to get on with the proper business of life, which is preserving quiet propriety in all things and collecting monogrammed linen. Her four offspring grow up variously inhibited or self-indulgent; some find happiness, some unhappiness. Either state is equivocal. In **Family and Friends** Anita Brookner has acuity enough for a moderate social satire but never commits herself to it, preserving an even-handed neutrality of tone, a kind of well-bred Bloomsburyish murmur. Outside, barely remarked, the Second World War slips by.

She knows a few postmodernist tricks: chapter one (first published in *Granta*, though that is not acknowledged here) is presented as a group photograph about which the narrator has some uncertainties of perception. Such gestures do not conceal the fact that what Brookner is writing is actually a family saga, without the awful vulgarity. She throws out a lot of the genre furnishings and brings the whole thing in at just over 50,000 words. And we shall buy it in our tens of thousands: her last novel won the Booker Prize.

Terry Wilson is the foremost English disciple of Brion Gysin and William Burroughs. His novel **'D' Train** shares their fractured style and many of their obsessions: lonely hotel rooms; homosexual alchemy; pagan Morocco. *'D' Train* flickers with disembodied voices and warnings: get off the 'D' Train before it reaches its apocalyptic destination. On present showing, today's most admired British authors would not be on the 'D' Train in the first place, having all departed from the opposite platform. Wilson's novel is occasionally lovely and will not win the Booker Prize. □

ART

The Middle Way

John Spurling

Buddhism: Art and Faith
British Museum

THERE ARE PLENTY of visitors to this large exhibition mounted jointly by the British Museum and the British Library, but for the Westerner and stranger to Buddhism it's a daunting experience. Art *and* faith?

History and geography, too, for the show is laid out in regional sections and to understand how Buddhism spread south, north and east, proselytising virtually the whole of Asia, you need a nodding acquaintance with King Parakramabahu I of Sri Lanka, the Karkota dynasty of Kashmir, the Newars of Nepal, the 10th-century Second Propagation of Tibet, King Aniruddha of Burma, Thailand's lost kingdom of Śrivijaya, the Xinjiang section of the old Silk Road, the collapse of the Han Dynasty in China, the unification of Korea in AD 668 and the military politics of 6th-century Japan. Best to plunge straight into the art.

Even that is not at first encouraging. So many Buddhas — bronze, stone, clay, wooden, gilded, painted, drawn and printed in so many styles and semi-styles — so many *arhats*, Bodhisattvas and alternative Buddhas, so many unfamiliar legends and pencil-box-shaped manuscripts of the scriptures and their commentaries in innumerable scripts, so many *stupas*, long and short and squat.

Most of the 420-odd exhibits belong to the BM or the British Library and all but two of the specialists who have assembled and described them belong to the same institutions. If the subject is Enlightenment (the original meaning of *buddha*) — the shaking oneself free from this world of desire and suffering — the form could not be more eloquent of the earthly passions of inquiry, collection, preservation and classification summed up in that mysterious Western concept, BM. All you can hope to carry away from a first visit is a few especially memorable mental images and a copy of the indispensable catalogue, edited by W. Zwalf (£8.95 from the BM, £12.50 elsewhere). The images are likely to be sculptural, since the manuscript illustrations are small and somewhat repetitive to the lay person, while the large wall-hangings are mostly dark, partly ruined, devotionally laid back or all three. There are some lively painted scenes of legend and ceremony from Burma and Thailand, but the Japanese naturally excel with works on paper, both because of their traditionally energetic expertise with woodcuts and because they converted Buddhism itself into a much more worldly and culturally sophisticated faith than it had set out as.

The sculptures begin at the foot of the staircase leading up to the gallery with a 6th-century Chinese Buddha in white marble, whose expression of total withdrawal greets you nearly six metres and several flights further up

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the stairs. There are more beautiful and more sensitively carved or modelled Buddhas inside the gallery, but none that asserts more unequivocally the intellectual grandeur and unapproachable purity of the faith. The world causes nothing but suffering to the creatures trapped there; nothing in the world has any value that is not illusory; therefore the Buddha, like a great white candle, slowly enlightens himself out of existence and urges all other humans to do likewise.

The crowded black stone reliefs from Gandhara — which flourished in the Peshawar Valley from the 1st to the 6th centuries AD, until it was overwhelmed by Islamic conquerors — are more friendly: the subjects are stories from the legendary life of the Buddha and the style is indebted to the stalwart humanism of Greek and Roman art. But sculpture which negated the physical as wholeheartedly as the Buddha himself (or at least those who passed on and modified his oral doctrine) would be a contradiction in terms. As the faith split into many sects and moved further afield from its origin in Eastern India, its monastic asceticism softened and admitted more popular elements: Buddhist saints, local gods, a heaven and a hell, hopes of self-improvement for the layman short of total Enlightenment and even a sort of Buddhist Messiah called Maitreya.

All this the artists, who had at first had to confine themselves to symbols instead of human images, responded to with gusto and with imaginative regional as well as sectional variations. The Chinese tended to make their Buddhas look high and mighty but they also contrived to turn the Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (perhaps confusing him with an Indian goddess) into a lady and the BM owns a small 17th-century porcelain figure of her turning imperiously to one side, with her cool, white draperies swaying lightly over small fat feet.

A 9th/10th-century Sri Lankan artist also evaded the predominantly male iconography of Buddhism with a lifesize golden bronze figure of the goddess Tara, wasp-waisted and half-nude in a tight, transparent skirt just clinging to the hips. A Christian artist would have called her Mary Magdalene and invested her with guilt but this artist makes physical sensuality stand for spiritual compassion without any sense of contradiction. Thailand invented the idea of showing the Buddha as a free-standing walking figure and most of the south-east Asian images (painted or sculpted) have a nervous, fey quality, with flame-like headdresses and decorations, as if they set more store by the spiritual excitement of the ascent to *nirvana* than the purged nothingness of its attainment. Burma's contribution is a thoroughly human, charmingly modest, but also princely Buddha, young and naturally elegant even as he lies on his deathbed in a 19th-century copper version whose face and demeanour have hardly altered from the dark, smooth, seated bronze of six centuries earlier and is repeated in another irresistibly sensitive and courteous 19th-century figure, made of lacquered and gilded wood and standing delicately on a lotus.

The exhibition is not intended for specialists, but it makes few concessions to the casual visitor in the way of populist presentation and it demands homework on the catalogue and at least a second visit before it begins to be properly visible and intelligible. The Buddha, who regarded perception, sensation, emotion and consciousness as only elements binding the living creature to desire and suffering, could hardly have approved, but Nagarjuna, the 2nd-century propounder of the Middle Way, might have. 'The Middle Way,' in the words of the catalogue's introduction, 'was interpreted as neither affirming nor denying the existence or non-existence of anything.' □

Lotus *élan*: 6th/7th-century Eastern Indian sandstone Buddha

THEATRE

Citric acid

Victoria Radin

Aunt Dan and Lemon
WALLACE SHAWN *Royal Court*
Tribute to Sir Michael Redgrave
Old Vic

HERE IS Lemon (née Leonora) a thin young woman dressed in grey, her staring eyes a Tory blue. She is out to entertain us for an evening and, as she sips a beverage that comes from one of the evil-coloured bottles behind her on the sideboard — something like lime and celery juice, for Lemon is not a *well* person — she tells us about her life. Hers is an isolated, invalid's existence — even the radio is too much for her — and, as she speaks about it, her thoughts turn, naturally enough, to the Nazis.

Lemon rather likes them. Indeed, she admires them, for 'they accomplished a great deal of what they wanted to do'. In her empty life they provide a deep and satisfying source of speculation. And Wallace Shawn's **Aunt Dan and Lemon** shows, or tries to show, through the medium of Lemon's memories of her own childhood, how she arrived at her opinions, for her opening speech is but a hint of her horrific closing one.

Shawn, a very New York New Yorker, is the author of, among other things, the filmed conversation-piece *My Dinner with André* and of the stage play *A Thought in Three Parts*, a very funny meditation on sex. He is, fortunately for *Aunt Dan and Lemon*, capable of infusing everything he writes, including the text's eight-page 'Appendix' or apologia, with a quaintly idiosyncratic vividness. He gets immediately to the nitty-gritty — those private impressions and embarrassing half-thoughts which resound so startlingly onstage. Thus we find Lemon's father (played by the author), an American student at Oxford who stayed on in England to become an executive in car parts, immediately launching into a eulogy on the English crumpet, which seems to 'absorb butter like some living creature'.

Lemon's memories tell us, however, that she had an unhappy childhood. She found her father 'a kind of caged animal' and we witness an awful scene between parents that hints at some fatal source of decay in their relationship.

When she is 11, Lemon moves, like an outcast fairy, to a little house at the bottom of the family garden. There her only source of joy is Aunt Dan (for Danielle), an American-born Oxford

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don and her parents' best chum. Dan, written by Shawn to be played by the very undersized actress Linda Hunt, is Shawn's most problematic creation, on which his argument about morality, or to give it its proper name, evil, depends. Dan comes into Lemon's hutch every evening to tell her stories. They are often interesting stories and show the love of narration for its own sake which we saw in *My Dinner with André*. But Dan's stories are of a different sort. Most of them concern sex — clandestine sex, or sex allied to violence or, in one case, a lesbian affair with a gangster's moll which lasted a week. Why only a week? asks the young Lemon. Because, Dan replies, 'it never has anything to do with love.'

Dan's sexual politics, Shawn is undoubtedly suggesting *inter alia*, inform in some Reichian fashion her views on public matters. For the source of her own personal joy lies in happy speculations on the life of none other than Henry Kissinger, who was at the time purveying his views of the American way in Vietnam. As her mother feebly argues the other side, Lemon listens to Dan's long-winded disquisitions on the goodness of Kissinger and the cross he bore, on how governments and those who lead them use force 'so we can sit in this garden and be incredibly *nice*.'

Or sit in the Royal Court and be incredibly flattered because we disagree? In her closing address Lemon brings Dan's arguments to what the author clearly feels is their logical conclusion: the impulse that made the Nazis murder the undesirable Jews is the same one that makes us kill an alien cockroach. Compassion is a lie. There is something 'refreshing' about the Nazis' 'honesty'.

I find this play courageous, cunning, very funny when the author wants it to be, utterly individual and haunting; and sometimes meandering and hectoring and naive. As in all cases where a general rule is arrived at from a particular, one is left to wonder: would Lemon's thoughts come to anyone, or just a sensitive girl with eating problems? Like *My Dinner with André*, the piece works as a dialectic: here, the audience, having been treated to both sides of the coin, is expected to supply a silent rebuttal to Lemon's final sick exhortations. I couldn't help feeling sorry that the Nazis had again been called on to lend portentousness to a discussion of morality.

At the last preview Max Stafford-Clark's production showed some signs of strain, with Peter Hartwell's sets lending an unwelcomely weighty air to a lot of scene changes. Linda Bassett contributes an utterly credibly pained Bloomsburyish mother, Lynsey Baxter a sexy slut-murderess and Kathryn Pogson is very good in Lemon's difficult opening and closing speeches. I shall think and think about the play. In the meantime, I'd like to ask Mr Shawn: Doesn't he know there aren't any cockroaches in London? This, like the fact that most supermarkets here close at six pm, is something that New Yorkers will not believe.

At the Old Vic last Sunday: an O-so-English, scatty and compendious **Tribute to Sir Michael Redgrave** which joined the family to some surprises like Sir Peter Hall. The evening was enhanced by Sir John Gielgud's Prospero and the silver-birch trees of Ralph Koltai's stylish setting. □

FILMS

What dreams may come

Francis Wheen

It's for you-oo! Heavy breathing *Elm Street* style

Subway (15)
Lumiere; Chelsea Cinema; Camden Plaza

A Nightmare on Elm Street (18)
Leicester Square Theatre

Desperately Seeking Susan (15)
Warner West End; Classics Haymarket, Oxford Street & Chelsea; Gate, Bloomsbury; Coronet, Westbourne Grove; Screen on the Green

LUC BESSON'S FIRST feature, *The Last Battle*, was widely touted as last year's *Diva*, a comparison which Besson doesn't seem to have minded one jot: in the opening sequence of **Subway** a car is driven down a subway staircase by Christopher Lambert, in what is presumably a deliberate little homage to the famous mobilette-in-the-metro scenes from *Diva*.

Nor do the similarities end there. Last year I found myself quoted in advertisements as having praised *The Last Battle* for being 'stylish, enigmatic and beguiling'. True enough; but, as you might expect, not the whole truth.

What I had actually written was that Besson's debut, like *Diva*, left one wondering if it was anything more than an exercise in pure style. For myself, I found the relentless punk *chic* of *The Last Battle* rather wearisome after the first hour or so, but the film was much appreciated by those who agree with Pierre Jolivet (the star of *The Last Battle*) that the purpose of cinema is merely to 'create spectacle in every form'.

There are certainly plenty of spectacles to enjoy in *Subway*. There is, for instance, the splendid incongruity of a ball-gowned Isabelle Adjani meeting dinner-jacketed Christopher Lambert on a bleak metro platform while a gang of heavies — all in formal evening wear — lurks behind the concrete pillars. There is a bag-snatcher (Jean-Hugues Anglade) whose roller-skates are fitted with headlights; in one particularly spectacular chase sequence, he leaps right over the rails from one platform to another like a low-budget Evel Knievel.

Above all, there is the unreal setting of the metro itself, which in Besson's vision (and thanks to Carlo Varini's stunning photography) becomes a city in its own right. It has its inhabitants, all of them eccentric; it has its shops and restaurants; it even has its own police force, led by the wry, sarcastic Inspector Gesberg (wonderful Michel Galabru), assisted by a bungling pair of *flics* who like to be known as Batman and Robin.

The Christopher Lambert character, a

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bleached-out fugitive called Fred, enters the metro in search of sanctuary but is soon accepted as an honorary citizen of the subterranean metropolis. He is joined there by Helena (Isabelle Adjani), who is also a fugitive of sorts, escaping from a rich dunderhead of a husband. Her farewell to her spouse takes place at a gloriously-choreographed dinner party, where she suddenly announces to the assembled white trash that 'I don't give a shit'. Her husband orders her to apologise. 'Apologise for what?' she asks before storming out. 'For being bored for three hours?'

Needless to say, it all ends in tears. More damagingly for the film, the hitherto controlled wit degenerates into something nearer farce. A rock group clad in tropical shorts and pith helmets plays an unscheduled gig in the metro, at which the oldsters in the audience — who've been expecting a Brahms concert — start to jig along with the rest of the punks. Fred gets his comeuppance and one is left with the feeling that Besson's nerve has somehow deserted him in the last ten minutes or so. Until then it may have been soulless and pointless, but at least it was fun.

A similar last-minute cop-out mars Wes Craven's otherwise unimprovable horror movie **A Nightmare on Elm Street**. The last few moments are wholly out of keeping with the rest of the film and look suspiciously as if they were tacked on by somebody else as a trailer for a sequel. A pity, because apart from that it is a most elegant shocker. The story, as with all the best horror films, is simplicity itself; it is doubly effective because it recalls one's own half-forgotten childhood fears. Teenagers are killed by someone in their nightmares, a monstrous scarecrow called Fred who has razors where his fingernails should be; the only way of avoiding him is to stay awake. One brave girl (Heather Langenkamp) does so, until she works out a way of dragging the beast from nightmares into the waking world.

Wes Craven uses many of the conventional tricks of the trade — dark corridors, eerie staircases, long shadows and special effects galore — but he wields them with a verve that makes all those Stephen King movies seem very second-rate. Craven has said that he wanted to prove that horror needn't be synonymous with misogyny, and I think he's succeeded. Certainly it's most refreshing to see a chiller in which the strongest character, by far, is female.

Which brings us to Madonna, this year's instant mega-star of rock music. You've heard the records, you've seen the nude photos (well, perhaps you haven't), you've read about the wedding. Now here's the movie, **Desperately Seeking Susan**, and the first thing to be said is that it ain't half bad considering how dire most rock stars' ventures on to the screen have been. Moreover, to follow up my point about Wes Craven, one cannot but be well disposed to a film which is scripted and directed by women and in which the female characters are the ones dictating the action.

It's a kind of American screwball version of *Celine and Julie Go Boating* in which a bored housewife (played by the versatile Rosanna Arquette) dips a toe into the water of her fantasies and soon finds herself fully submerged, coming up at the end looking and acting like Madonna herself (who plays the desperately sought Susan). I have to admit, however, that I found the determined wackiness, kookiness, etc., etc. of Madonna and Rosanna Arquette a touch of irritating after a while. I'm also rather mystified by a reference in the production notes to a scene involving a camel. What happened to it? □

Recommended viewing

A regular selection by our critic from films still doing the rounds

Birdy Eloquent images, inspired technique, skin-tight performances give brave lift-off to allegory-flecked adventures in blue-collar Philly of ornithological obsessive (Matthew Modine) and butch buddy (Nicolas Cage), later traumatised by Vietnam. Alan Parker's most sympathetic venture since *Bugsy*.

The Purple Rose of Cairo Woody Allen's brilliantly faceted, sad-funny fantasy, as relevant to our depressed Eighties as its Depression Thirties. Actor in idiot flick descends from New Jersey screen briefly to woo movie-mad, downtrodden housewife, making chaos and whoopee. (Mia Farrow, Jeff Daniels).

Witness Australian director Peter Weir in fine-tuned control of offbeat US thriller. Rugged but honest city policeman (Harrison Ford), grudgingly harboured from bent colleagues by time-warp Amish farmers, shares unconsummated love with Kelly McGillis's superb widow until the inevitable, estranging shoot-out.

DANCE

Razzle-dazzle

Stephanie Jordan

Michael Clark & Company
Riverside Studios
Direct Current Dance Company
ICA

THAT BRITISH MODERN DANCE has so rapidly evolved from straight-laced sincerity into the insouciant anarchy of **Michael Clark** is a certain sign of artistic vitality, but the reaction on the first night of *our caca phoney H. our caca phoney H.* suggested a division between fans wailing encouragement and those struck dumb, finding themselves bewildered and incapable of applauding.

Clark has recently described the piece as a 'summation' of his past 18 months' work, but I prefer to think of it as the furthest reaches of a work in progress over that period: it could develop for ever. So, at present, patches of music by The Fall are retained with some of their earlier choreography. Leigh Bowery's curious costumes (and bulky presence) are still evident, though Clark now turns more to the off-beat excellence of Body Map, whom he employed previously in *Do You Me? I Did.* New is Jeffrey Hinton's mix of music from *Hair* (on at the Shaftesbury Theatre when Clark was six) and other familiar recent chart singles pervading the first half. ▷

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These references have little bearing on the stage work; only occasionally will Clark echo the lyrics in mime. Performers speak, sing, address members of the audience; stooges, including infant and infantile phenomena, stray on stage; there is a little naughty nudity, some dildo deployment and tons of *travesti*. But, though it is intended to be comical, you don't laugh — it's too dangerous and forthright. Rabelaisian?

Some components are wholly admirable. As far as you can perceive under the intriguing costumes, Julie Hood, Ellen van Schuylenburch, Leslie Bryant (a very Lindsay Kempian addition) and Clark all perform as cleanly as ever, but Matthew Hawkins must be mentioned for his stylistic elegance and curious nobility, surely the result of Richard Glasstone's balletic tutelage of the company. Clark's use of stage, timing and dovetailing of ideas suggest a theatrical maturity far advanced from the creakiness of some earlier work. My reservation is that his considerable talents are not being shown to best effect. Much choreography here is fine, but much is frequently thwarted, blurred by the soundtrack, camouflaged by theatrical fireworks, superficially dazzling.

Clark offers us the Critic's Dilemma: it's not magnificent but it might be art. He is controversial because he is audacious but it remains to be seen whether *our caca phoney H.* is an important event or, as stupefied critics hankering for the familiar thought, a titanic piece of sodding about.

A Personal Appearance is the second production by Michael Popper's **Direct Current Dance Company** and is similar to the first only in invoking Russian literature as distant progenitor. Esenin remembered last year is replaced by Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita* this year.

How far the press should involve itself with this novel is uncertain, the laconic Mr Popper making no reference to it in the programme, but probably the uncontrolled fantasy and period detail was an inspiration. There is no connecting thread, it's more a surreal mosaic: the Crucifixion is there upside down and Ann Gruenberg's backcloth suggests spectators at Calvary; there is a conjuring review sketch, scenes within an asylum and a nicely observed parody of a Parisian accordion ballad. While not consistently inventive, Popper's choreography shows a new fluency. Loops of movement full of gestural content, hints of action and relationships between one person and another abstracted into dance all attest his debt to Ian Spink's Second Stride work, a stimulus altogether beneficial to his creativity. Popper is also ambitious musically, having involved four composers and four musicians in this 100-minute work. But, as with Clark, I miss rationale. □

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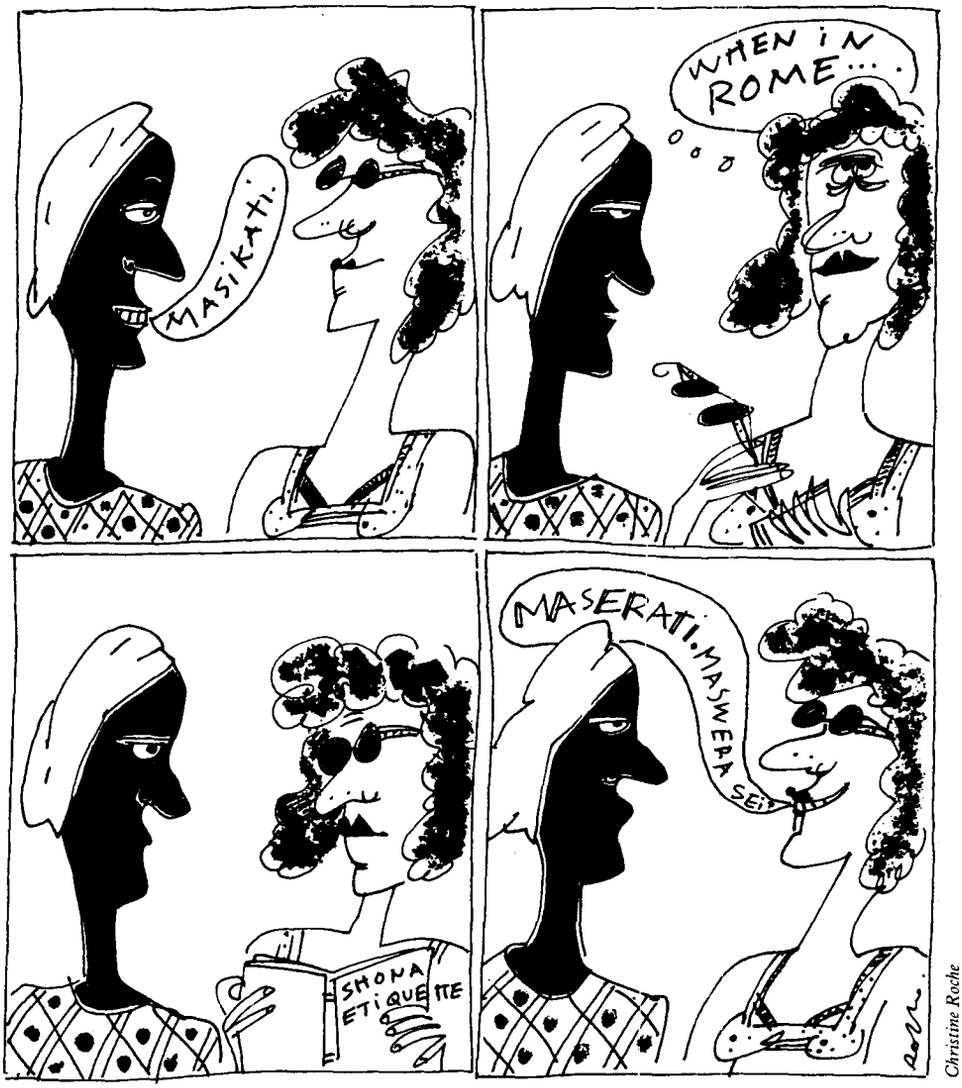

Christine Roche

When in Harare

Kate Kellaway

WHEN I WAS teaching in Zimbabwe, in one lesson we were discussing good manners in different cultures. One of my students put up his hand and said: 'Why is it your people just say "Hi!" to each other and then run away?' Everyone laughed. I couldn't immediately think of an answer.

At the time, I had myself been undergoing an education in Shona manners: I was living with my boyfriend's family in a large black township outside Harare. I was the only white person for miles around. When I first came to live there, I was greeted with wariness but never with hostility and, eventually, the wariness changed to friendliness. The hardest problem for me was coming to terms with my own foreignness and whiteness: I felt foreign to myself, an extraordinarily isolated phenomenon. I can remember, after weeks of not seeing a white face, catching a glimpse of myself in a mirror and, for a split second, wondering why my skin was so faded and odd. But if I sometimes forgot what I looked like, I never forgot who I was: I longed for an escape from self-consciousness. I was always conspicuous, on stage, but like someone who has been given a part without any stage directions.

This was partly my fault. When I first arrived, I'd planned not to surrender my culture; I had my own version of good manners. I told myself I wasn't living in the township to pretend to be African. There were already, I thought defensively, too many expatriates ostentatiously winding traditional materials around their waists or showily cooking *sadza* in the traditional way.

It did not take long to realise that this was the worst decision I could have come to; it was not just arrogant, it was wrong. Manners in all countries are play-acting of a sort and are as essential in Zimbabwe as they are everywhere else.

Shona greetings are elaborate and take time:

Masikati
Masikati. Maswera sei?
Ndaswera kana maswerawo.

Translated, this means:

Good afternoon.
Good afternoon. How are you?
I am fine if you are fine.

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I have often wished that we had a similar greeting in English: it so neatly evades the necessity of commenting on how you are at all.

If you want to greet your elders and they are sitting down you must always sit down yourself before addressing them. If you are both standing up then you should give a little curtsey to show respect. I used to do this, feeling foolish and pretentious at first, until it became a reflex. The Zimbabwean family I lived with used to be delighted and amused every time it seemed I had got hold of some new bit of politeness. I remember I was once meant to be cooking the dinner. When you cook in someone else's house, you are always meant to say 'excuse me' to the Mother or the main cook of the household. I caused much mirth when I said '*Pamusoroi*' before taking hold of the wooden spoon.

When you are given a present or a plate of food in Zimbabwe, you clap your hands to express your thanks. If you are a man, you clap with your palms flat. If you are a woman, you clap with cupped hands. Then, when you receive the food or the present, you take it with both hands, not one. I got so used to doing this that I find I still automatically want to bring my hands together whenever anyone gives me something. The pause while you clap, the passing of time before you take make you seem somehow less greedy, more grateful. The pause is important: manners take time. Perhaps that is what I ought to have discussed with the student who asked why the English often do not even stop to greet each other. Ours is such a hurried politeness. A Zimbabwean colleague of mine made the point:

> In Shona I don't just ask my neighbour if I can borrow his spanner. I will go and greet him, ask him about his wife, his children, his grandchildren, the chickens. We might talk a bit of philosophy and then I'll say: 'By the way, could you lend me a spanner?'

My initial reaction to this was how maddening. Why couldn't he have got straight to the point? What an infuriating waste of time that polite preface is. It was so difficult to regrasp the idea of a politeness that takes time.

In Shona culture, good manners are extended to the dead as well as the living: the traditional religion is ancestor worship. Time is involved in good manners in another sense; manners include the past: honouring your history. When you leave a house where you have stayed to go and live somewhere else, there is a leave-taking ceremony in which you ask your ancestors to protect you. When my boyfriend and I left the township to go to a rich suburb nearer to town we were summoned into the small, shady living room for this ceremony. We took some snuff and sprinkled it on the ground for the ancestors. The ancestors are very fond of snuff.

'What am I supposed to do?' I hissed anxiously at my boyfriend.

'You must make a wish or think whatever you want to say to your ancestors.'

I couldn't satisfactorily summon up my Australian grandmother for the ceremony, or feel that the snuff was for her. But I remember feeling moved and inadequate. In the end my message was for the living. It was to the family, an unspoken English 'thank you'. □

Naseem Khan
One year on

BIRTHS: To the *New Statesman*, on 7 September 1984, a column: Work in Progress. Sister to elder siblings Dance, Theatre, Music, Architecture, Television, Art and Film.

A year ago, when this column began, there was hardly dancing in the streets — apart, that is, from me; when I wasn't being alarmed at the vague nature of the future. Work in Progress's brief was so wide that you couldn't actually see any horizon. Like a certain beer, it aimed ostensibly to reach the parts that other arts coverage didn't reach: community arts, for instance; mixed media; policy debates; workshops; little local events that might seem small beer but were in fact large trends writ small. 'Fair enough,' said a gloomy colleague after three months, 'but you're not going to be able to go on finding things to write about week after week.' Problems there have been, but not that one. How to fit all the work that presented itself into one 950-word weekly column has been the main problem. And what sort of value system does one operate? What sort of context does one use?

In a sense, the established arts reviews have it easy. (I say this with no sour grapes, since I rather like insecurity.) They belong to defined fields, with bodies of critical tradition behind them, and are serviced through all sorts of convenient devices: press releases, press tickets and so on. Work in Progress, by contrast, is homeless and nomadic. It has had to beat its own boundaries in the past year, and some strange places it's been led into — dancing till late among packed hundreds to a sweaty folk beat in Derby's Assembly Rooms; joining in the 'devising workshop' for a Hackney community Christmas show; flying a kite on top of a Yorkshire hill; watching black kids contend with the rigours of a classical ballet class.

It's been led — Alice-like — down the labyrinths of art subsidy. 'Off with their heads!' cried Red Queen-Grey Gowrie (or, more soberly, 'For the rest of the century, public funds will be under restraint') as he swept through the glades of policy. (The flattened card creatures you may have perceived were the starved outlines of community arts and ethnic arts felled by a chill wind of change.) It's found its way to the edges of arts forms: radical experiments of performance artists, neglected British folk arts, much maligned mime. It's hunted for evidence of new support mechanisms — distribution networks, back-up information groups, new groupings of artists. In a smaller span, this column has traced some of the outlines of the amorphous, inconsistent creature that is the arts in Britain at work today in halls, streets, workshops, festivals.

What's the point of it all? Why, for instance, go to Durham for a conference of community publishers rather than a new performance, say, of Kent Opera? 'Out-of-the-way projects' was how the normally sensible *Arts Express* described the subjects of this column, begging the question 'Whose way?' One man's B road is another man's (or woman's) highway. Who sets up the signposts and designates one a motorway and another 'Local Traffic Only'?

If nothing else, I hope that Work in Progress is demonstrating the existence of a wider network than is normally understood by 'the arts' and a more complex set of possible relationships between the arts and arts-users: not just consumers and producers, professional artists and non-professional spectators. A Brighton housing association uses video, for instance, to push its case with the council; an ecology group works at redefining the links between people and nature as expressed in art works; miners' support groups use video, again, to create an alternative voice; diverse cultural traditions seek out a synthesis in order to provide a living argument against racism. All are areas in which the arts are being used, like a matrix, to extend general areas of concern. The arts are not decoration.

It is at times all too tempting to glorify new initiatives and bridgeheads. In the long run, it does them no service, since it disregards the very real problems faced by, in particular, the less established arts. Not everything in the broader garden that Work in Progress observes is lovely.

The concept, at the base of this column, of the arts as a universal facility has taken some knocking this year. And it's not over yet. Local authority cut-backs have not made good seedbeds for the arts. And although some urban areas have been shielded from the worst by the generally supportive role of metropolitan authorities, those days are numbered. When the mets — GLC and others — go, there'll be a significant fall-out. Far too many new initiatives have relied utterly on, in particular, the GLC. And government replacement funds are only a pale shadow of actual expenditure.

The general climate of uncertainty over the past year has given rise to a number of developments. On the one hand, there's been the positive one of a search for protective structures against future hard times: new distribution services, new 'banks' of resources for local groups. A good thing, clearly, lessening what Owen Kelly, in his *Community, Art and the State*, characterised as a flaccid reliance on outside funding. On the other hand, there's been a tendency to gravitate, artistically, to the middle of the road. Venues have shrunk for performance arts (*pace* Brighton's lively Zap Club) and 'fringe theatre' has lost its drive. The tune of the decade seems to be playing safe, and who can wonder?

For all that, there are enough signs of counter-activity to keep Work in Progress both gainfully and cheerfully employed. And pressure on the arts does have the advantage of bringing the issue of the arts to the fore. 'Let us fight for them,' says the new arts lobby. But what constitute the arts? For whom? By whom? With shrinking resources and administrative muddle ahead, they are questions that will be as central to Work in Progress's second year as they have been to its first. □

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TELEVISION

Andrew Rissik
Too true to be good

RICHARD PASCO is turning out to be one of television's subtlest and most compelling leading men. In ITV's new Friday-night serial **Drummonds** he plays the good-hearted but somewhat naive headmaster of a shabby preparatory school for boys in the genteel, middle-class England of the Suez Crisis. The achievement of Pasco's performance, and an uncommonly good script from Reg Gadney, is to discover a splendid layer of sententious pomposity lurking just below the surface of what might have been yet one more polite, nostalgically-minded exercise in middlebrow soap opera.

Up till now, Pasco had struck me as a rather earnest, over-intense sort of actor. He had a distinguished career at Stratford playing major roles, was Jaques and then Brutus for the BBC's dismal Shakespeare cycle and then, last year, took the leading part in *Sorrel and Son*, where he played a penurious father forced to work in service to bring up his son. This summer he gave an excellent performance in an indifferent BBC2 play, *Pythons on the Mountain*, and with George Drummond he has found a character of considerable pathos and great comic potential.

Since I went to a school not unlike this one, less than a decade later, I can vouch for the authenticity of Gadney's dialogue and the kind of people he depicts. There are affluent parents fervently convinced of the social value of prep school education and a staff common room filled with half-mad eccentrics who simply wouldn't be employable anywhere else. As the headmaster, Pasco is a cut or two above them. He wears old but expensive suits, sucks on a huge log of a pipe and struts self-importantly in front of the new boys like a Rear-Admiral on his quarterdeck. Later, he appears in the junior dormitory just long enough to say a brief but pompous goodnight and, when a spluttery old warhorse shows up claiming to be the chairman of the Governors, switches deftly to a tone of well-mannered deference that is toadyingly accurate.

But neither Pasco nor Gadney falls for the obvious comic trick of sneering at Drummond and sending the old fellow up. Instead, they present him as a considerate, old-fashioned man who, behind predictable Imperial sentiment and traditional authoritarian style, is formal, retiring and, ultimately, rather lonely. Looked at through the distorting glass of history, Pasco's Drummond may be a buffoon, but he is trying to be kind and, in an England that is shifting socially beneath his feet, his behaviour has some truth and dignity. It will be interesting to see what becomes of him.

I am much less convinced of the dramatic worth and interest of Granada's **The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes**. It's true that the acting is excellent, and we can surely never have seen a better, milder, more intelligent and less stereotypical Doctor Watson than the one David Burke is giving us. Jeremy Brett's rightly admired Holmes is a vain, drug-addicted intellectual, icily remote and caustically arrogant. A great deal of the value of this performance lies in its austere flamboyance. Holmes talks with ascetic precision, assuming that his listeners are stupid, and he moves with a languid, nervy grace which reveals an extraordinary inner fastidiousness.

But the stories are tedious and melodramatic and it's difficult to work up much enthusiasm for what is, in the end, merely a suave elision of clichés.

Someone once observed that detective stories of this kind make excellent bedtime reading for tired politicians or weary businessmen because they require virtually no emotional input. When reading Conan Doyle you engage not with character or psychology but with what is really an abstract problem, an uncomplicated mental game in which crime is the opening premise. And, in the last two weeks, it's this neglected human dimension which seems to me to be so lacking in these undemanding, adroitly filmed adventures.

Some of the cinema's experiments with the character have been much more vital, exuberant and emotionally compelling. Christopher Plummer's silky Holmes, solving the Ripper case in *Murder by Decree*, was an anguished Victorian liberal stonewalled by the implacable face of conservative authority. Robert Stephens, playing Holmes for Billy Wilder in *The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes*, was a conceited old sod who came damn near to getting his comeuppance. But Granada are stuck with the books and, on screen, Conan Doyle is depressingly literal-minded. This bloodless Victorian melodrama needs a touch of Bram Stoker. When Gerald Harper played Holmes in a splendid stage version of *The Sign of Four* called *The Crucifer of Blood*, it was precisely that sense of Gothic, that elemental excitement, which made it such effective theatre. Jeremy Brett deserves something better than this rota of tweedy murderers and routine continental villains.

JASON ROBARDS has played too many famous men. By now we've seen him as Dashiel Hammet, Richard Nixon, Ben Bradlee, Franklin Roosevelt. As Andrei **Sakharov** in BBC2's American-bought tele-movie, he had little to give beyond intelligent line readings and that grave, Roman face. Directed with great visual finesse and unsentimental fluency by Jack Gold, the film was filled with English actors doing ample justice to small roles. But what was wrong is what's so often wrong with this kind of thing. The script was a pious rehearsal of known historical fact and dutiful political platitude. Limited either to known event or safe conjecture, it told us little we did not know already. A documentary can marshal fact with equal — often greater — conviction. It is the duty of the dramatist to find some imaginative dimension which journalism cannot give us. □

Weekend competition

No 2889 **Set by Gerard Benson**

The chairman of Union Carbide was recently reported as saying, of the leak of gas from his company's plant that sent 135 people to hospital, that 'some things could have improved' but that people had overlooked many 'good things' about the accident — the fast response of emergency crews, for example. Could we have spokespersons' explanations of the many 'good things' about Passchendaele, the Irish potato famine, the sinking of the Titanic or some other apparent disaster of history? Max. 120 words by 18 September.

No 2886 **Set by E.O. Parrott**

Television or radio interviews with God.

Report **By Len the Unlucky**

This will have to be brief. Typing with one arm in plaster, the fingers of the other in splints, the neck in one of those pink supports and, incidentally, a boil in the groin ('First you *get* run down,' quipped my doctor, 'now you *are* run down, ho, ho') is not an activity to be prolonged. An honourable mention to P. Crockett (keep trying, young person, keep trying — not *everyone*'s as unlucky as me) and ten pounds each to those whose (passable) interviews with God appear below.

(God comes down the stairs in white samite, mystic, wonderful...)
(Michael Parkinson doesn't look bad either)
Parkinson: Well, God... God, this is going to be difficult *(scratches ear)*. I'd better start by telling you a bit about myself. I was born in Barnsley...
God: I know.
P: Of course, you know everything; oh this is going to be difficult for me...
G: I'd have the same difficulty if the situation were reversed.
P: Well, I'll come right out with it: do you play cricket or football?
G: No.
P: *(desperately)* Do you like films? Old musicals perhaps?
G: I don't really have the time.
P: No romances, of course?
(God gives a half wink)
P: You mean...!
G: Well, let's say I'm not talking Virgin records. Incidentally, I had to sink that, you understand; that and blasting the cathedral...
P: Finally! A scoop!

R. MARTIN

Robert Robinson: *(seated before plaster-of-Paris celestial portals)* God, this question is for you. Let's see what you can make of it. 'Man considers the actions, but God weighs the intentions.'
God: Ooooh! That's so familiar. I know this one so well. It's not... is it?... Robert Runcie? No, Kierkegaard? No, wait a minute, *The Koran*.
R: Well, you're not quite there I'm afraid.
G: Yes, I'm sure it's modern. Could it be Clive James?
R: No, I'm sorry, I'll have to pass this one on to the panel. Can anyone identify this? Yes, Lucifer.
Lucifer: This is one of my favourites I must confess, Bob: Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*.
G: Hell, I should have known that. How did you do it?
L: I think it's called omniscience.

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R: That's all we have time for so it's goodnight and, if I may say so in the circumstances, God bless.

NICHOLAS MURRAY

Janet Street-Porter: Ow me Gawd... I moine this riley is unbelievable... I moine... not being er religious sorta person...
God: May I have a glass of water?
S-P: Wonnit tine inta wine... ha ha ha? I moine... do yer ave the nous ter tine this sthuff inta O'Brien '67?
G: I do a quite passable Latour on occasion. Not terribly good at getting the years right, I'm afraid.
S-P: Ha ha... incredible... yer so umble... ha ha... Can I ask yer a riley schtoopid question?
G: Are yer riley almighty?
S-P: Ha ha... yer spittin orl over me... Yer've read me bleedin mind... there's sumfink else...
G: You were on the point of making a silly joke about the Virgin Birth.
S-P: Ow shit... *(waddles around the studio patting distended tum)* Ha ha... I fink I'm going ter wet me knickers... yer've riley lide it on me mite... ha ha... Give Gawd a big hand folks... ha ha...

(Applause and fade as Janet gives birth, laughing)

RUSSELL LUCAS

'...aaaaaand that song by Paul McCartney, without *any* doubt the greatest songwriter since Schubert and what a privilege to play it on today's jolly old prog... *and* reminding you before we go orft for the news that you can speak to our special guest who's sitting here right beside me... *and* I'm sure you'll agree it's a great honour and pleasure....

'Yes, a great pleasure.....'

'For us too... we won't discuss money if you don't mind... not after that Cabinet Minister... when we said the fee would be 50 pounds for appearing on the prog he said would we take a cheque... Ho Ho Ho! anyway, we'll hear from Rosemary from Streatham who's got a *verrrrry* special question... do you know Streatham?

'Quite well, yes, I...'

'*Annnnnnnd* stand by for news of next week's special topic on irrigating the Sahara desert, but before that a song from the second-greatest ballad singer of all time... yes, its John Denver, aaaaaand, while it's playing, I'll ask our honoured guest to... hey, where's he gone?

JIM ANTHONY

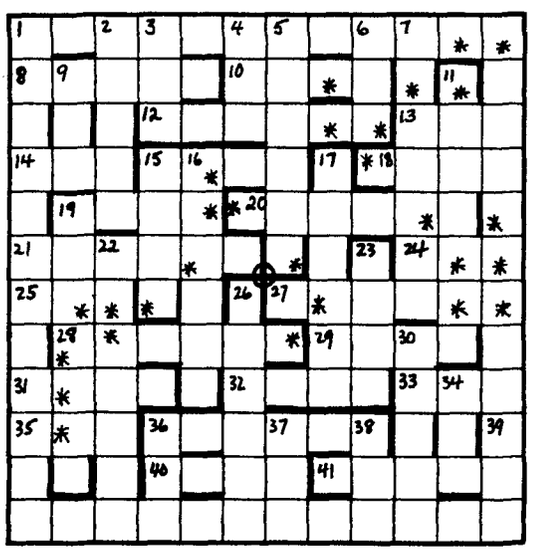
Russell Harty: You know, when I was at Queen Elizabeth Grammar School, I never dreamt that one day I'd be sitting here and interviewing you like this. My headmaster would never have believed it.
God: Do you want to see him?
H: Oh heavens, no. Can you *do* things like that? So *Monkey's Paw*-ish. Let's have a bit of Elgar. I feel overcome *(music plays)*. I always say a bit of *Gerontius* makes you feel better. I did go with Auntie Mabel once to a spiritualist evening. Mrs Mommsen was the medium, but I expect you're even more dazzling, being God. I do feel a bit of a nit talking to a great shining light — like interviewing a lighthouse. Where was I? Let me guess. You have some special purpose in coming along and appearing on this programme?
G: Armageddon.

GEORGE MOOR

Salamanca 98

'Star Trek'

PRIZES: £25 cheques for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Salamanca 98, New Statesman, 14-16 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, by first post 1 October.



Examples of the theme closely associated with the title are omitted from ten answers to defined words before becoming lights, which the remainders of their clues indicate. These omissions, the diagonal at 1 (for which Encyc. Brit. may be a help), some features of the grid and the starred squares which are all more or less correctly positioned, should enable solvers to spot the significance of the 'diagram' and thus complete the perimeter (six words beginning at 39) whose normally unchecked characters declare AUROUS VESSEL — RUM HERE. (This puzzle composed from an idea by A.L.Vann.)

Name_____

Address_____

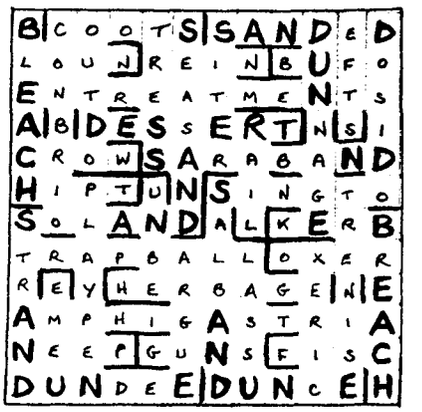
ACROSS

8 Eastern star twinkling formerly but no longer (5)
10 Worthy Scots: course director throws one out (4)
12 Turning-points when stones contain diamonds (9)
13 Binary, dead orb, going round for all to see (3)
14 I swallow victims whole, see? (Hole, black) (5)
15 Who uses tutors to make astronauts? (4)
18 On the moon, oddly enough, there's no water in it (4)
19 Gullies: rigols which wind neither left nor right (4)
20 Gas in composition around melting core? They could be (6)
21 Crescented one appearing in night-time? (6)
24 Take in trouser bottom, take bit off top (3)
25 Press, and what it may sometimes print? (3)
27 Driver entering foreign wharf, square part (6)
28 Red, possibly, revolving with force in extremes of densities? (6)
29 Dissolved substances may be upset (no second) (7)
31 Old tax rate mostly fixed on ship (4)
32 A woman in service once married (4)
33 Who's at heart of America (nationally)? (3)
35 Title concealed in diagram's rim (3)
36 Point-source: it's in old region that's timeless (6)
40 Path in space not right? These ceremonies are observed after path's finally travelled (4)
41 In sci. fi. an author with a halo perhaps that's hot (5)

DOWN

2 To get an antelope I first erect a pen? (5)
3 Upcoming society taking sc. fi. as boring excrement? (5)
4 Ears have them, tufted generally, inside openings (5)
5 Lofty part to play in a healing? I'll put you under safely (6)
6 Lung sounds diseased, not altogether missing (5)
7 Attended classes stateside, taxied, amused perhaps, not wanting exams (7)
9 Hot wind coming up from Barcelona (6)
11 Neutrons at their source? Pipers need it for energy (7)
15 Old life-saver: not the Fuhrer, initially? (4)
16 Like one with heavenly light at end of gaze? (6)
17 You could say it takes in all matter of particles etc. (6)
19 Captains catching fish in the heaving surge (7)
22 Reporting the type of lyrical stuff for 1984, obviously? (7)
23 Solid in liquid form? Container for it must have easy lid (7)
26 Any matter with one made it to an atmosphere? (6)
30 Of the foreign painters, he's first-class power? (5)
34 You'll need some force to deal with one (3)
36 Question on the Scriptures (5)
37 Professor of Theology to work hard (5)
38 One of stylish Hotels, timeless, got up in America (3)

Solution to Salamanca 97



Twelve answers are regarded as ostriches and bury their heads in the sand: de(spot), s(kipper), raba(tine), ol(dish), de(feat), c(rack), l(umber), eas(tern), nag(ging), alb(ergo), tr(oops), r(anger).

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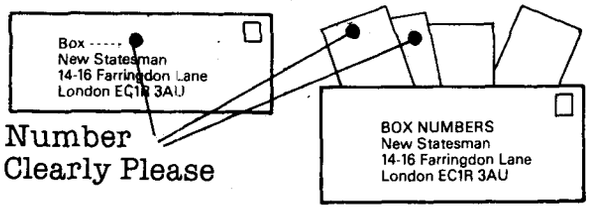

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LISTINGS

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BARNSLEY Socialist Society Summer School 'Empowering the Powerless — What Kind of Left do we Want?' 2-dys at Northern College. **Details: Socialist Society, 9 Poland St, W1. 01-734 8501.**

SUN 8 SEPT

LONDON Gays & Lesbians against Apartheid, Imperialism & Racism meeting 1pm-4pm Marchmont Community Centre. Disabled access. **Details: Hugh Livingstone, GLAIR, 274 Upper St, London, N1.**

WED 11 SEPT

LONDON Stop Nuclear Waste Dumping — Pacific Women Jacoba Seman & Maria Pangelinan speak on 'A Nuclear Free and Independent Pacific'. 7.30pm County Hall, SE1. **Org. London Region CND 01-388 1628.**

THURS 12 SEPT

HACKNEY 'Future of the Left' discn. with Alok Biswas, Nigel Stanley, Nina Temple 7.45pm Hackney Asian Centre, 17-19 Dalston La, E8. Adm. Free. Disabled access. **Org. Hackney Communist Party, sponsored by Marxism Today.**

LONDON 'Breaking Silence: Lesbian Nuns on Covent Sexuality' — discn. with Rosemary Curb & Nancy Manahan authors of this controversial book published today. Chair: Sara Maitland. 7.30pm Conway Hall, Red Lion Sq, WC1. Women only. Adm. £2/£1 UB40. **Details: Women's Press Bookclub, 124 Shoreditch High St, E1. 01-729 4751.**

FRI 13 SEPT

BIRMINGHAM Conference of Assoc. for the Study of Modern France 'France and Modernisation' — 2 dys at Aston University. **Details: Dept. of Modern Languages 021-359 3611.**

LONDON Benefit for South African Miners 8pm Camden Centre Bidborough St, NW1. 60's Soul from Luddy Sams & The Deliverers, ANC spkr., Nat. Rank & File Miners Movement spkr. Adm. £3.50/£2 UB40. Proceeds to ANC/Miners Movement. **Org. Holborn, St. Pancras & Finsbury Miners Support Grp.**

SAT 14 SEPT

BALHAM Health Day School 10am-4pm Family Centre, Bedford Hill, SW12. Spkr. Frank Dobson MP. Local Health Needs/workshops on women, drugs, ethnic minorities, elderly. Creche & lunch. **Org. Tooting Labour Party — John Lyons 01-675 3608.**

LONDON Women's Music Workshops with Ova — 2dys 10am-5pm Caxton House, 129 St. John's Way, N19. Special price for whole wkend: £15/£11 low-waged/£7 UB40. **Book in advance: Ova Music Grp, 122 Holly Lodge Mans, Oakeshott Ave, N6. Details: 01-341 4967.**

FORTHCOMING

17-27 SEPT LONDON Carnegie Youth Unemployment Project exhibition of photographs by young people from TUC Centre for Unemployed in Workington, Cumbria. 10am-5pm TUC, Congress House, Gt. Russell St, WC1. Adm. free.

18 SEPT SUTTON 'Direct Action as Protest' by Pat Arrowsmith. 8pm Friends' Meeting House, Cedar Rd. Adm. free. Disabled access. **Org. Sutton CND.**

This is the last Listings column. Notices of meetings, events, fundraisers etc. will in future appear in our new AGENDA Column starting in the next issue. Please see announcement p22.

PURSUITS

WOMAN, MID-FORTIES, NW London, is interested in organising a small, informal discussion group, general topics, including the Arts. Any ideas, suggestions, welcomed. Box (36) 1390.

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MEETINGS

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I AM an attractive, blonde, tall, sensual, intelligent woman, who loves people, loves men, has been through marriage & non-marriage, established in prof. career, with well developed sense of humour & arts interests. Are you a tall man who knows himself and is still growing, established in work and life, but looking for real contact and commitment with the right partner, age 35-50? If so, hurry while tan lasts! Box (36) 1393.

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MALE ACADEMIC, 41 and divorced, travelled extensively and with wide interests, seeks non-smoking, professional female, to share joie de vivre in a relaxed setting. Northwest Merseyside, can travel. Box (36) 1395.

MALE, 40, missing warmth and intimacy in unsatisfactory marriage. Seeks female possessing sensitivity and a sense of fun, for caring relationship. (First advertisement). London area. Box (36) 1421.

MATURE LADY, 40-60, sought by platonically tied gentleman of 46, living in Hampshire, for a discreet relationship. Meet daytime any weekday. Box (35)1382.

NORTH EAST: attractive male, 35, 6' 2", slim, fit, separated father, wide interests, artistic profession, non-establishment, self-reliant. Seeks intelligent, sensitive, sensual woman for affair or full relationship. Box (36) 1417.

REASONABLY ATTRACTIVE male graduate, 32, not influenced by stereotyped view of female beauty, seeks Bo Derek look-alike. Photograph of car and bank balance appreciated. Sense of humour essential. West Midlands but travels well. Box (36) 1414.

"7/DAYS/" 24hr Accom. Address. Unlimited Mail £1 mth. Discounts 3 mths £2.50p 6 mths £4.50p, 1 yr £8.25p. M. Abrahams, 15 Clifton Gardens, London N15. 01-800 0373.

SINGLE MAN, 30. Marxist, interested in writing, humour, cinema, sport. Seeks intelligent, articulate, socialist woman with sense of humour, for stable, long-term relationship. Yorkshire. Box (36) 1388.

STRONG, CREATIVE woman, 31, fed up with silly games seeks tall, genuine, emotionally/financially stable man. I am 5' 8", fair, socialist, professional. West Yorkshire. Box (36) 1413.

UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR in Canada, 32, single, male, socialist, affectionate, wide interests, seeks lively socialist female, for long-term relationship. Box (35)1374.

WARM, LOVING, SENSUAL FRIENDSHIP being looked for by John (36) — warm, affectionate, gentle, imaginative, lively — with new women friends. Also walks, dance, cinema, etc. Inner/S. London/N. Surrey. Informative letter (and photo?), please. Box (36) 1397.

WEST COUNTRY woman: anti rat-race, worry about man's inhumanity to man, liberal mind, nature lover, imperfect, affectionate, middle aged. Children long since flown. Find longed for solitude has become destructive loneliness. Would love to build harmonious companionship with like-minded man hopefully permanently. Box (36) 1411.

WHAT IS lacking in my life is someone else rather left-wing, rather interested in peace, who has (preferably) heard of feminism. I am 30 & female and live in Birmingham. Box (36) 1392.

YOUNG MAN (22), graduate, slim, reasonable looking, gay but inexperienced, moving to Brighton in October, seeks friend(s) of similar age (over 21), to ease transition. Box (36) 1420.

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